“Diversity” as a Racialized Keyword: A Mixed-Methods Analysis of Diversity Discourse, Racial Projects, and Rearticulation in the USA

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of Minnesota

By

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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July 30th, 2021

Acknowledgments

I have been at UMN for a long time. Over seven years of graduate school, plus my years as an undergraduate and a research assistant, I have many, many people to thank for their help, advice, and friendship. There are too many to name them all, and my sincere apologies and gratitude to those who deserve all the recognition in the world; you know who you are.

First, I am extremely grateful to my advisor, Dr. Douglas Hartmann, whose help has been instrumental in this project and my years as a graduate student. I must also profusely thank my other committee members—Drs. Rose Brewer, Joseph Gerteis and Enid Logan—for their advice and input throughout my time in the Sociology department.

I must also issue a collective thank-you to the entire at the University of Minnesota department of Sociology, as well as many from other departments. From taking graduate classes of my own to being a Teaching Assistant for undergraduate classes, I have learned so much from you all.

I must also acknowledge Dr. Chris Uggen, Dr. Douglas Hartmann, Letta Page, and all of the graduate students on the Graduate Board of the TheSocietyPages. I have enjoyed the years of productive public sociology, and TSP has been very important to my own personal beliefs about the importance of sociology and sociological work. Perhaps more importantly, the time at TSP has always been a constant source of laughs and smiles, which is worth its weight in gold for a dreary graduate student.

In addition, I would like to thank the leaders of the American Mosaic Project—Drs. Penny Edgell, Joseph Gerteis, and Douglas Hartmann—and the other graduate students involved with this project. Being a member of AMP has greatly shaped and bolstered my career, and the advice and assistance from members of the research team has been instrumental in my research.

A special recognition must go to members of the UMN LATIS team and Text-as-Data Group, particularly Michael Beckstrand, PhD, for the immense technical support and feedback I received during my work on this project. Without this help, I couldn't have done the research in this dissertation.

The Sociology Department at UMN has been blessed with amazing staff and administrators. With all due respect to my committee, I could not have made it this far with the department staff. A special thank-you and my gratitude to Ann Miller, Becky Drasin, Bobby Bryant, Kerrie Thier Deef, Hilda Mork, Mary Drew, Hollis "Holly" Schoonover, and Katie Gronevelt.

Finally, but most importantly, I must thank my family for their rock-solid support and assistance during the seven years I have worked on my PhD. Love you lots.

Dedication

This project is dedicated to my grandparents. They may be a world away, but the distance has never stopped their constant support, well-wishes, and blessings.

Abstract

My dissertation uses critical race theory, poststructuralist theory, and mixed-methods empirical analysis to study diversity discourse(s) in the USA. The keyword "diversity" has many meanings and can refer to a wide variety of personal and social differences, yet diversity discourse has a salient relationship with racial difference and racial contestation the USA. In the project, I historicize and describe mainstream diversity discourse, which has been the focus of a substantial body of ongoing sociological and critical inquiry. Such scholarship has highlighted how mainstream diversity discourse, while celebratory and positive, often falls short of pursuing true racial justice. But, while diversity discourse is hegemonic, it is far from monolithic and one dimensional. My project discusses "rearticulations" of diversity discourse that are similar yet distinct from the mainstream; some have the potential to foster attention to inequality and the pursuit of equity, but others work to uphold racial hierarchy and patriarchy.

The introductory chapter considers the significance and implications of diversity discourse for racial contestation, political ideology, and the general culture wars in the USA. This chapter describes how critical race theory and poststructuralism inform this project; it also describes my project's theory and conceptual vocabulary, based on Omi and Winant's "racial formation theory" and Laclau and Mouffe's "discourse theory." The chapter also provides an overview of the logic and research design of the three substantive chapters: a genealogical analysis, a survey analysis, and a textual analysis.

Informed by Foucaultian genealogy and Omi and Winant's historical analysis of racial formation, the first chapter develops a new historical analysis of the origins and evolutions of diversity discourse in the USA. It begins by discussing how the rise of "diversity" was shaped by racial contestation and political-ideological clashes in the decades from the Civil Rights era to the current moment. The chapter then presents a review of sociological and other scholarly research about diversity discourse. Finally, this chapter discusses rearticulations of diversity discourse that have spawned and grown during the current time. These rearticulations are built upon familiar tenets and meanings associated with "diversity," but they apply and frame this keyword in ways that are substantively, normatively, and ideologically distinct from mainstream diversity discourse.

The second substantive chapter analyses nationally-representative survey data about everyday Americans' attitudes towards diversity. My analysis explores how such attitudes are related to demographics, political ideology, and beliefs about other race-related concepts such as affirmative action and immigration. Findings show that Americans have generally positive diversity attitudes. Additionally, Americans' diversity attitudes prove relatively distinct from other race-related attitudes such as prejudice and colorblind racism; diversity attitudes are not just a proxy or indicator of other beliefs, but a unique, distinct, and coherent set of beliefs. Despite this distinctiveness, further exploration shows that diversity attitudes are significant predictors of other race-related topics, indicative of how diversity discourse is implicated in racial contestation in the USA.

The third substantive chapter analyzes a cultural snapshot of diversity discourse in news media. I analyze 8,000+ unique texts from six high-profile American news; the sources range

across the political spectrum. Texts were purposively-sampled for their usage of the keyword "diversity," "multiculturalism," or related terms. First, descriptive statistics indicate that multiculturalism and similar language is present in only a small proportion of texts in the data (~4.1%), indicative of how thoroughly diversity discourse has supplanted multiculturalism in the American lexicon. Then, to highlight the social conversations where "diversity" language is pertinent today, I present unstructured topic models. I find several similarities in the topics, themes, and settings discussed in the texts from the various news organizations. Specifically, immigration, politicians, the tech industry, and colleges are commonly discussed in texts from all six media sources, although several topics such as tourism are relatively unique to one or two corpuses. This shows that several consistencies exist in the uses of the keyword "diversity" across these news media texts; of these topics, many have historically been battlegrounds of racial contestation.

Finally, based on sub-sampling and qualitative close-reading, the third substantive chapter also explores two nascent but important trends in the rearticulation of diversity discourse. These are *Diversity of Thought* and similar phrases versus *Diversity and Equity* and similar phrases. Of these new directions, the former is more prominent in conservative media and is often employed in ways that serve conservative political goals. The latter is a more liberal-leaning rearticulation which draws some attention to inequality and exclusion, but my close-reading suggests that this phrase is somewhat symbolic and watered-down, often referenced in passing rather than frequently being a strong and normative point of focus for racial justice. Studying these rearticulations in action highlights how their ideological and normative dimensions are implicated in political contestation and the culture wars in the USA.

Overall, the project illustrates how diversity discourse's past, present, and future are reflective of and constitutive of ongoing social struggle between the pursuit of racial justice and the entrenchment of racial hierarchy. Mainstream diversity discourse has been shaped by the interplay between racial democracy and racial despotism in the USA, both historically and today. Furthermore, this project provides an original analysis of newer articulations of diversity discourse that will be relevant to the future of racial contestation, political-ideological battles, and the culture wars in the USA. Additionally, based on my application of Omi and Winant's "racial formation theory" and Laclau and Mouffe's "discourse theory," this project is a first step in developing my original theory of "racialized keywords," an analytical perspective for studying how changing meanings, keywords, and discourses shape racial contestation, political ideology, and the culture wars in the USA.

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Diversity Attitudes in the USA

Introduction

Welcome to the Project

> "[T]he diversity that furthers a compelling state interest encompasses a far broader array of qualifications and characteristics of which racial or ethnic origin is but a single though important element."
>
> --Justice Powell, *Bakke vs University of California Regents* (1978)

> "Learning to manage diversity will make you more competitive."
>
> --R. Thomas, *Harvard Business Review* (1990)

> "In the 1990s the Clinton administration made the encouragement of diversity one of its major goals. The contrast with the past is striking. The Founding Fathers saw diversity as a reality and as a problem: hence the national motto, *e pluribus unum* [out of many, one]"
>
> --Samuel Huntington, Ch 12, p306, *The Clash of Civilizations* (1996)

> "[L]ife is precious, and part of its beauty lies in its diversity. We shouldn't be embarrassed by the things that make us different. We should be proud of them. Because it's the things that make us different that make us who we are."
>
> –President Barack Obama ("Back to School Speech"), 9/14/2010

> "The State Board of Education shall require each Florida College System institution to conduct an annual assessment of the intellectual freedom and viewpoint diversity at that institution."
>
> –*Florida HB233* [House Bill, Florida State Legislature], 1/13/2021

My project draws on sociology, critical race theory, and discourse analysis to study the nature, significance, and evolution of the keyword "diversity" in the USA. A mixed-methods design, based on a combination of historical, survey, and textual analysis, triangulates and maps the past, present, and future of diversity discourse(s). Overall, the project shows that American diversity discourse reflects and shapes ongoing social struggle between anti-racism and resilient durable, and even re-emergent racial hierarchy

(I sometimes refer to this overarching conflict as "*racial contestation*" in the project). Academics have studied a particular form of mainstream, everyday diversity discourse with an eye to its consequences for racial ideology and racial hierarchy in the USA. My project contributes to such work and also explores new rearticulations of the keyword "diversity" which are both similar yet distinct from mainstream diversity discourse (I clarify my use of *keyword* and *discourse* in my theoretical section).

One of the main claims and overarching conclusions of this project is that "diversity" is heavily implicated within the trajectory of racial politics in the USA. This keyword is common the American lexicon, used in a variety of spaces and near-hegemonic in its cultural scope, but its ubiquitous nature belies its definitional vagueness. Diversity can refer to many forms of difference, as evidenced by years of research. Diversity has the ability to amorphously mean anything as a consequence of its hyper-inclusivity. Nevertheless, I find that "diversity" has a complex, salient, and impactful relationship with race in America, reflective of how diversity discourse(s) historically developed in the post-Civil Rights era amidst a uniquely American history of competing racial projects within a country defined by racial hierarchy. Despite the keyword's inclusiveness of many forms of personal and group differences, contemporary understandings and rearticulations of "diversity" are poised to play an important role in continued racial contestation, particularly as relevant to contemporary challenges, discourses, and social issues that maintain racial domination and white supremacy.

This is not necessarily new information, of course. Academics have been focused on the racial nature and implications of diversity discourse for quite some time now, as

well as the predecessor "multiculturalism" before diversity's rise (Ladson-Billings 1996; Jones 1999; Hartmann and Gerteis 2005; Bell and Hartmann 2007). Informed by critical race theory, sociological literature has spent a productive several years interrogating the nature of diversity discourse as a tool for pursing racial equality; much of the sociological literature has studied this in institutions such as colleges and businesses (Kelly and Dobbin 1998; Villalpando 2002; Urcioli 2003; Collins 2011; Embrick 2011; Berrey 2015), with a more recent turn to how mainstream diversity discourse features in community settings such as churches, parks, and K-12 schools (Voyer 2011; Burke 2012; Mayorga-Gallo 2014; Aptekar 2015, 2017; Hoekstra and Gerteis 2019). Generally, this body of literature agrees that mainstream diversity discourse falls short of truly pursuing and fostering racial justice in our society. Diversity messages in America are often separated from goals of remedying discrimination and dismantling racial hierarchy, and its definitional vagueness can be deployed in ways that latently and intentionally obfuscate attention to racial inequality and other forms of marginalization. Surface -level commitments to embracing diversity alone will not do the job; a critical, empathy-driven, justice-oriented method is needed. Until then, racial hierarchy will likely remain intransigent even amidst growing racial diversity and outwardly-celebratory diversity discourse in America. To establish a more just, equitable, and non-discriminatory society, "diversity" ideas must be critically studied and reconsidered so as to address issues of general inequality, hierarchy, and exclusion (Moore and Bell 2011; Herring & Henderson 2011; Lewis and Cantor 2016). Authors have been correct to critique mainstream diversity discourse. But, there is more to the picture.

Currently, small, budding diversity discourses have grown from seeds to little sprouting offshoots of mainstream diversity discourse; they are poised to be harvested, rearticulated, and deployed in starkly contrasting ways, ranging from progressive agendas to reactionary bigotry. From a historical sociological perspective and a critical race theory lens, the rearticulation of "diversity" is no shock. Historically, keywords and discourses associated with race-related topics in American history have developed new meanings and implications that shape racial hierarchy as well as important meanings and inequalities in our society as a whole. The rearticulation of diversity discourse is poised to shape the future of race in America in many ways, but also the general crux of political partisanship and ideology.

This entire project began with an interest in unpacking and critically interrogating the phrase "diversity of thought" and similar phrases. These phrases have popular talking point in the last few years among conservative backlash and political agendas, used in ways that have important and potentially damning implications. Consider how rearticulations and discourses associated with terms such as "affirmative action," "welfare," and "crime" have shaped politics and policy in ways that uphold racial inequality and maintain white dominance; beliefs and discourses associated with these terms have been a generally-defining fulcrum for conservative politics and the contemporary Republican party (Gilens 1999; Alexander 2011; Soss, Fording, and Schram 2011; Bobo et al 2012; Haney Lopez 2014) In a process reminiscent of the racial discourse that shaped the Reagan era and the neoliberal turn, the political Right is currently re-articulating and weaponizing this term in ways which actively undermine the academy, racial justice, and the realization of a truly diverse, equal society.

At the same time, there are other more progressive rearticulations that create opportunities for a more equitable, justice-oriented version of diversity discourse. Such rearticulations do more to discuss inequality and marginalization than the existing diversity discourse that has been the focus of existing sociological research. While they're surely far from perfect both in message and in practice, such new diversity discourses offer a ray of hope. Therefore, this project contributes to scholarly understandings of diversity discourse by discussing mainstream diversity discourse (sometimes referred to as the "diversity ideology"), and by illustrating the diversity of diversity discourse itself. Lukewarm, weak-at-best mainstream diversity discourse may be supplemented by rearticulations which drive this discourse even *further* away from goals of anti-racism and dismantling racial hierarchy. That said, we should not give up on diversity entirely. We can foster and develop other rearticulations of "diversity" that not only celebrate racial difference, but also emphasize justice and equality. Indeed, this trend is already in the works. Today, term such as *inclusion* and *equity* are sometimes attached to institutional and everyday diversity discourse. While it remains to be seen whether and how such rearticulations work to achieve equality, such rearticulations are meaningfully and substantively different than mainstream diversity discourse. Thus, my project develops sociological understandings about how the keyword "diversity" can be framed and applied; my project theoretically considers and empirically illustrates how American diversity discourse is evolving.

This project also puts forward my theory of "racialized keywords," which I hope to develop more fully based on work here; this theory came together as I was thinking through the theoretical framework of this project. First, the project is has always been

rooted in Omi and Winant's "racial formation" theory, a sociological theory of how social life in has been and continues to be foundationally shaped by the interplay and evolution of racial oppression, resistance, equalization, and retrenchment. I became interested in applying and advancing Omi and Winant's concept of "rearticulation," especially as I saw the rearticulation of diversity discourse actually happening in the social world. This led me to consider other theories and scholarly literatures regarding discourse, meaning, and signs, leading to my use of "discourse theory" in this project. I had always liked Laclau and Mouffe's poststructuralist discourse theory, which I first learned about in Discourse Analysis with Dr Teresa Gowan. This theory describes the rise and fall of discourses and meanings in the social world, with a poststructuralist emphasis that discourse is not natural, inherent, or fixed. Synthesizing racial formation theory and discourse theory, this project puts forward my own original theory of "racialized keywords." which I believe helps sharpen general scholarly study of how discourse, and language, and rearticulations shape the trajectory of racial politics and racial hierarchy. Within a context of various meanings, keywords, and ideologically-motivated discourses, *rearticulation* is as a social process that often works to insulate and update racial hierarchy, yet also will be key to dismantling it. Outside of the concept of "diversity" itself, I believe this theory could be useful and relevant for general sociology of race and critical race theory, and I plan to develop it further. Within this project, I draw on this framework to describe "diversity" and synthesize the analyses across my various chapters and the mixed-methods approach that this project takes. Below, I describe my substantive chapters; then, the rest of this introductory chapter describes the theory and methods in more detail.

The first substantive chapter describes the historical rise of diversity discourse in the USA, providing a genealogical discussion of how racial formation shaped the growth, popularity, and implications of the keyword "diversity" from the mid-20th century until today. Based on a Foucaultian approach, I present a genealogy of diversity discourse in American history, a tale I tell using the vocabulary of my theoretical framework. These chapters detail the rise of the ubiquitous term "diversity" as related to the history of race and racial hierarchy from the mid 20th-century through the first two decades of the 21st century, with an eye to the future. I discuss the evolution of diversity discourse within a broader backdrop of historical and contemporary racial contestation in the USA. Within this chapter, I review contemporary sociological and critical research about diversity discourse. This genealogy chapter concludes with some vignettes and attention to under-studied and newer, nascent directions of the keyword "diversity" in the USA. This picture is interwoven with our contemporary, contentious moment of racial contestation and the culture wars (Hunter 1991; Hartman 2019) in the USA, pointing to a future ripe with implications for racial hierarchy and competing racial projects in the USA.

The second substantive chapter is analyzes nationally representative survey data to present, explore, and contextualize key patterns in attitudes about "diversity" among everyday Americans. In this chapter, I analyze the nationally representative 2014 Boundaries in the American Mosaic (BAM), which I have worked with as an RA for the American Mosaic Project. This dataset is particularly is well-suited to this project, as it has several unique survey items that measure attitudes about the keyword "diversity" in

distinct and contrasting ways; this is a major advantage over some nationally-representative surveys such as the GSS or the NORC. In addition, the BAM survey contains many items related to political and ideological beliefs, racial attitudes, and ideals about civic citizenship and the American public sphere. Through a combination of different statistical processes, I explore the concept of "diversity" in the American imagination and as relevant to racial contestation and the general "culture wars" in the USA. This includes an analysis of how Americans responds to various survey items that frame this keyword differently. I also consider diversity attitudes as relevant to racial beliefs, political ideology, and other such attitudes.

The third chapter analyzes a large sample of media texts from six purposively selected news sources that range across the political spectrum. This is to investigate, illustrate, and chart how diversity discourse is deployed, understood, and rearticulated today in culture and discourse in the USA. The third substantive chapter is a mixed-methods textual analysis, presents findings from a mixed-methods content analysis of diversity discourse across the political spectrum; The dataset is my own unique creation, based on sample of over 8,000 online texts identified and scraped across several continuous months in 2017-2019. The texts are all from a purposive sample of six different nationally-recognized news media organizations ranging across the political spectrum. Using quantitative and qualitative textual analysis methods, I explore common topics, themes, and normativity across the different news media sources. My mixed-methods textual analysis studies the uses and implications of diversity discourse in American culture, and I highlight nascent rearticulations that will surely grow in the near-future.

Overall, the project shows that keyword "diversity" is reflective of competing racial projects and politicized contestation driven by race-related topics, both historically and today. Mainstream understandings and deployments of diversity are discursively and ideologically embedded in the ongoing clash between racial democracy and racial despotism in the USA, much of which reflects the historical trajectory of racial politics. But, there are newer rearticulations and diversity discourses which can both challenge and insulate racial hierarchy. As I draft the final version of this dissertation in the end of June, critical race theory bans have become a frightfully regular headline in my news feed. Clearly, DuBois' famous "color line" (oft-attributed to his 1903 *Souls of Black Folk*) is still strong in the year 2021. Racial oppression, the racial dialectic, and (neo)politics of race continue to shape cultural understandings, discourses, ideologies and social life in the USA; truly, the idea that this country is "post-racial" is laughable at best. In the future, the self-conflicted keyword "diversity" will both challenge and uphold racial hierarchy, depending on who's using it. And, as America becomes more racially diverse and racial inequality remains intransigent, "diversity" discourse of all kinds is sure to be relevant to cultural conversations about our changing population and ongoing issues of racial inequality. Therefore, I feel this project holds a special significance for the challenges of our current time, particularly addressing, battling, and ultimately defeating the seemingly-immortal monster we know as racial hierarchy.

The rest of this introductory chapter proceeds as follows. First, I lay out my key theoretical foundations and my contribution: a development and operationalization of "rearticulation" based on applying poststructuralist discourse theory. In this sub-section, I first illustrate the goals and foundations of critical race theory to contextualize what

makes my project "critical." I then discuss Omi and Winant's racial formation theory and describe the social construction of race and racism in history; I also provide a detailed explanation of Omi and Winant's vocabulary, which is relevant to the general theoretical framework and substantive interpretation of this project. Then, I discuss poststructuralism and Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory; I provide an explanation of their vocabulary as well, since I use Laclau and Mouffe's terminology to more sharply apply Omi and Winant's concept of "rearticulation," a contribution which could be useful outside of this particular project. Then, I turn to the research design and the mixed-methods analysis in this project, a strategic combination of different analyses that triangulates diversity discourse in the USA. This subsection then provides more detail regarding the approach taken for my historical-genealogical discussion, as well as the methodological nuts-and-bolts of the survey and textual analysis.

Project Theory

In this sub-section, I describe the project's theoretical background and potential contributions. In the sub-sections below, I first discuss how the history, mission, and general themes of critical race theory inform this project. Second, I elaborate on how my project's theoretical and analytical framework uses Omi and Winant's racial formation theory to explore diversity discourse in America. Their vocabulary and analytical concepts for understanding race in American social life provides a vocabulary and theoretical backbone I use to interpret the empirical and substantive findings of this project. Then, the third subsection presents a synthesis of the above theories with poststructuralism and discourse theory so as to develop the concept of "rearticulation"

from Omi and Winant's work. I originally pulled these ideas together with the goal of studying "diversity." But, as a critical-race-theorist and sociologist, I believe this framework could be of general interest to study how a myriad of different meanings, keywords, and discourses can function in ways that challenge and protect racial hierarchy in the USA.

Critical Race Theory

This project studies diversity discourse from a critical-race-theory perspective. Critical race theory (CRT) is a post-1970's school of thought spanning multiple social science and cultural-studies fields, with roots in critical legal studies and radical feminism. Originally conceived as a transformative movement to challenge racism and racial inequality, CRT was primarily pioneered by black scholars. Notable figures in the origins of critical race theory include Derrick Bell, Kimberle Crenshaw, and Angela Harris. From its inception and continuing mission today, CRT is the study of race with a clear and concrete mission of interrogating and challenging racial systems of power and subjugation, operating with an interdisciplinary epistemology (Delgado & Stefancic 2017). Overall, research that properly draws on CRT should combat racial hierarchy and illustrate how racial inequality continues to exist in spite of challenges, activism, and social mobilization which have pursued the opposite. Ideally, scholars drawing on CRT should prioritize the pursuit of racial equity and justice. CRT emphasizes that the historical, social construction of race and racial categories is reflective of the development of Western abstract liberalism, wherein the early democratic state as we know it was founded alongside colonial and imperial hierarchies which marked certain races as inferior to others. Thus, from a CRT perspective, racism was not an aberration,

an accident, nor a latent side effect; racism, both past and present, are actually the system working as it should.

To counter historical accounts and earlier scholarship that downplays the importance of racism within our contemporary, post-colonial world, CRT work focuses on revisionist historical accounts that highlight and critique the origins of abstract liberalism; this often involves direct attention to how historically inequality of rights and citizenship has shaped our society today. Much CRT research investigates how historical and contemporary social processes enable racial inequality; even after the gains of the Civil Rights movement and the normalization of non-racist ideals in the American public sphere, race still plays a central role in organizing life chances, sociopolitical ideologies, and systemic inequality in America today (Haney Lopez 1996; Desmond & Emirbayer 2009; Haney Lopez 2014). Contemporary critical race theory often draws on the perspective of intersectionality (Crenshaw 1990; May 2015) to consider how race and other marginalized identities intersect in mutually-constitutive ways that can't be reduced to simply one dimension or the other; this perspective was primarily pioneered by black women who highlighted how the marginalization they experienced as black was intertwined with gender and other marginalization. Thus, several themes and goals of critical race theory guide this project's analysis of the evolution of diversity discourse as related to American racial hierarchy, ideologies, and social systems; in line with CRT's mission on combating racial hierarchy and centering anti-racism, this project seeks to challenge how some new rearticulations of diversity discourse bolster white supremacy and patriarchy, as well as considering some other rearticulations of diversity discourse that are attentive to inequality and marginalization.

Methodologically, the first substantive chapter—a genealogy of "diversity" discourse—is in line with a CRT tradition of historical research and producing race-critical, revisionist explorations of history. By contrast, the second substantive chapter quantitatively analyzes survey data, and the third chapter uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches to analyze textual data. At first glance, quantitative methods may seem farther away from research traditions in CRT. Many CRT practitioners today may be skeptical of quantitative tools and analyses, given how such tools have been used to perpetuate racism and racist knowledge's in the history of the academy. But, must CRT eschew quantitative work entirely in the year 2021? I don't think so, personally. I believe that my mixed-methods analysis furthers a critical understanding of how diversity discourse relates to racial contestation in the USA. Plus, as I return to later in the project methods section, the word "quantitative" itself is a misnomer in any research or analysis about symbols, language, meaning, beliefs, attitudes, and/or discourse. As noted quantitative-content-analysis scholar Krippendorff (2018) writes, the object of analysis in such studies still exists *qualitatively* within our social world. There is quantitative research that is wholly and only concerned with numbers, such as monitoring infection rates or tracking currency inflation, but the quantitative work in this project is about parts of social life that are qualitative at the core. Overall, I feel that the theory and methods in this project provides a useful, multi-faceted contribution to the mission of critical race theory.

Racial Formation Theory

This project draws on terminology in Omi and Winant's seminal book, the famous and oft-cited *Racial Formation in the United States* (printed with three editions in

1986, 1994, and 2015). Their work provides a conceptual vocabulary I use to describe the history of racial hierarchy and the development of diversity discourse in the USA. Below, I begin with a discussion and contextualization of Omi and Winant's work, before presenting important terms with definitions and usage; I draw on this vocabulary in my substantive chapters to analyze and contextualize diversity discourse in the USA.

Focusing on race and centering its importance, rather than obfuscating, minimizing, or reducing it, was an important intervention for the original printing of *Racial Formation*. Omi and Winant challenged other theorists from a variety of perspectives that essentialized the existence of biological race or heavy-handedly reduced race to other dimensions, such as "class" and "ethnicity." In their illustration of why race cannot be boiled down or erased away in proper analysis, Omi and Winant's writing builds upon an important conceptual cornerstone of social science today: race is a social construction, but that doesn't mean that race is irrelevant to society; quite the opposite. Omi and Winant's work has been important in cementing the social construction of race and locating it at the center of power, privilege and inequality in contemporary social life as generally established ideas in academia today. Racial formation theory's fundamental starting point is that race is not rooted in physical or biological origins but social origins; therefore, even though race itself is a long-standing system, racial meanings and categories can and do change based on social context. This conceptualization of race's existence as a social construction shows that race is fluid; though change in racial meanings and categories does not happen overnight, race is an unstable and constantly changing entity.

Building an argument based on the evolution of European imperialism, racialized slavery, and racial discrimination within liberal democracies, Omi and Winant contextualize race in the history of the United States. They discuss how, from the beginning of post-revolutionary USA's existence, race has been fundamental not only to personal and group differences, but the logics and schemas that drive contemporary political thought and social systems, including everyday beliefs about civic society and the core axioms and material arrangements of capitalism. Omi and Winant highlight the importance of race in the contemporary liberal-democratic state's foundations, and they discuss the American State in terms of a "racial state." This illustrates that the State, in the sociological sense, is an important aspect to how race has been of social significance both historically and today. This discussion highlights how modern Western ideologies, and American ideologies in particular, are driven by racial logics. Contemporary understandings of citizenship, rights, and the economic-civic individual, are frames that developed and spread within in classical Western philosophy and academia alongside the mechanisms of colonialism, namely the social construction of race, racism, and racial hierarchies. Thus, racism and white supremacy are indelible cornerstones of our society's legal and cultural foundations, and the social construction of race is still constitutive of the ways society understands liberal tenets such as individualism, society, group boundaries, state power, and cultural norms. The early democratic state was built on histories of colonialism and thusly has been indelibly shaped by race and racial inequality. Furthermore, while the logic of race originated with European empires, such logic developed particular characteristics and qualities in the American context. Thus, Omi and Winant see race as more than a label or a category that gets attached to groups.

The very concept of race itself is a driver of social life, and the political democratic "state" in the USA has been constructed and governed society in ways which have always been shaped by race relations and racial hierarchy.

In Part I of their three-part book, Omi and Winant (2015) discuss previous theories that erased race, such as those that tried to reduce racial dimensions to class or ethnicity. Part II of the book spells out the nuts-and-bolts of their theory of racial formation, and illustrates why this framework is better than previous academic paradigms which reduced or erased race. In the 2015 version, Part III discusses three major moments and periods in post WWII American history; the rise of the civil rights movement and racial justice discourse, the rise of neoliberalism amidst an evolving racial order, and the Obama election within the context of colorblind racism. Throughout their book, Omi and Winant demonstrate that social understandings surrounding race have changed over time, representing a shift towards equality and anti-racism, but such shifts develop within social structures and hierarchies that purposefully solidify the dominant group's relative power and control. Thus, the potential for change in racial meanings, racial identity, and racial inequality is a sword that cut both ways; as I describe in my illustration of their vocabulary below, Omi and Winant's book highlights a general, ongoing clash between (a) social movements in pursuit of anti-racism versus cultural and (b) ideological and institutional backlash which protects racial hierarchy. Omi and Winant illustrate this back-and-forth dialectic through American history. The important moments they describe in their Part III were generally preceded by a moment of social change that had potential to help realize an anti-racist society in the USA, but such potential was tempered in ways that left racial hierarchy and white supremacy in place. In line with their work, I believe

we are entering another major period and moment of racial transformation, and that diversity discourse will prove highly relevant to the future of racial contestation; I return to this discussion of historical moments in my genealogical chapters.

Below, I provide a glossary of the key terms in Omi and Winant's theory, based on the 2015 printing of *Racial Formation*; this vocabulary guides my substantive chapter's discussion of diversity discourse as related to racial contestation on the USA. I use a combination of quotes as well as my own words in these definitions.

> *Racial Formation:* "The sociohistorical process by which racial identities are created, lived out, and destroyed" (p. 109). Racial formation is an ongoing, overarching process that is foundational to social life.
>
> *Social Construction of Race*: An epistemological perspective which sees "race" as neither a purely biological or wholly illusory concept. Race is created in social contexts and isn't real in the absolute sense, but has real consequences for society and social actors.
>
> *Racialization:* "How the phenomic, the corporeal dimensions of human bodies, acquires meaning in social life" (p109). This is the process wherein racial meanings are attached to identities, groups, and social culture in ways that didn't exist before.
>
> *Racial Projects*: Competing agendas based on cultural, ideological, and/or political mobilization that either challenge or uphold racial hierarchy. These can include grassroots social movements, top-down elites' efforts, and everything in between.

Racial State: A combination of State practices and general cultural rhetoric that structures social life. The racial state both is embedded within and upholds a general social system of policy, institutional, and cultural aspects of race in the USA. See Jung and Kwon (2013) for a review sociological theorization that has expanded on this concept.

Rearticulation: "A practice of discursive reorganization or reinterpretation of ideological themes and interests' already present in subjects' consciousness, such that these elements obtain new meanings or coherence" (p. 165). Rearticulation is a discursive maneuver wherein some widely-recognized idea or concept is restated and rewritten (i.e., *rearticulated*) in ways that preserve yet distort the original concept, often driven by of normative and ideological goals of the social actors who make and spread the rearticulations. In their discussion of this idea, Omi and Winant salute Antonio Gramsci.

Racial Despotism / Racial Democracy: The former represents moments of mobilization and social movements that push for racial equality, while the latter represents entrenchment and responses that insulate racial hierarchy and racial inequality. Omi and Winant's theories see social life in the USA, and the status quo pursued by the Racial State, as generally in equilibrium between these two poles.

Racial Politics: "The ways society is racially organized and ruled" (109). Omi and Winant describe several major periods of racial politics in the USA. They describe how most of the USA's history has been defined by *racial despotism*, with a slow and painstaking push for *racial democracy* across various points in history. The 2015 version of their book considers that our society today has replaced its racial despotism with a *racial hegemony* of colorblindness, albeit that hegemony is rife with contradictions; they describe it as "new and highly unstable" (132).

Trajectory of Racial Politics: This term represents the historical timeline of race relations and racial hierarchy in the USA. Omi and Winant see different periods within this trajectory that reflect the evolution and contemporary consequences of racial meanings, the racial state, and racial hierarchy. In many ways, the "culture wars" in the USA is intertwined with major moments of the trajectory of racial politics, reflective of how political ideology and cultural shifts have been shaped by the history of racial hierarchy.

To put these terms together as relevant to my dissertation, social life in the USA is driven by processes of *racial formation*, *the social construction of race,* and *racialization*, wherein race become meaningful from the individual to the societal level. Based on the clash between competing *racial projects*, the *racial state* maintains a level of equilibrium between *racial democracy* and *racial despotism,* encouraging cultural and institutional stabilization after periods of major transformation along the timeline of the *trajectory of racial politics.* Within these overarching processes of racial contestation, different social actors often employ *rearticulations* to bolster new-but-familiar understandings of certain ideas, concepts, and discourses. My project focuses on how diversity discourse's evolution and contemporary nature reflect the historical trajectory of racial politics, ongoing competition between racial projects, and nascent rearticulations that build on socially-shared meanings about diversity while also positing new meanings for the keyword. This is with the knowledge that racial hierarchy and white supremacy have remained intransigent well into the current era in the USA.

In many ways, the empirical analysis I provide parallels a genealogical discussion of the rearticulation of "colorblindness" within Omi and Winant's book. Writing about the context of the early Civil Rights movement years, they discuss how the terminology

and motif of colorblindness was promoted by activists pursuing racial equality. The general principle and orientation of colorblindness meant not seeing race, and this idea was an important argument to fighting classical racism and overt bigotry during the Civil Rights movement. But, this term and related discourse was soon turned on its head, used as a weapon of racial despotism rather than racial democracy. In the 1980's, in response to changing laws and policies related to black Americans and racial inequality, the political Right captured the ideal of "colorblindness," or not seeing the race, rearticulating this generally anti-racist idea in ways which attacked the gains and goals of the Civil Rights movement. This process ultimately factored into the formation and prevalence of what we know today as "colorblind racism," a prevalent racial ideology that critical scholars have interrogated at length for denying the existence of racial inequality and undermining attempts for racial justice (Bonilla-Silva 2003; Burke 2016; Doane 2017).

The rearticulation of colorblindness is discussed in more detail during my historical discussion in later chapters; this history is of particular importance not only as a conceptual example of rearticulation as described by Omi and Winant, but also as a major part of the story of the keyword diversity and the development of diversity discourse(s). In my concluding chapter of the dissertation, I revisit this topic to highlight how my findings parallel Omi and Winant's discussion. As my findings show, politicized rearticulations of diversity are poised to mimic the performance of rearticulations of "colorblindness" and the political-ideological functions of this term in creating what we know as colorblind racism and post-racial ideology today. If left unchecked,

rearticulations such as “diversity of thought” will undoubtedly insulate racial hierarchy and racial despotism within today’s new period of racial politics.

There have been many adaptations and constructive criticisms of the theories laid out by Omi and Winant, particularly by a more critical, more-recent generation of academics. This is a project rooted in critical race theory, but still wedded to Omi and Winant’s theory. Their book has been critiqued for a lack of explicit critical race theory in previous versions; the 1986 and 1994 version drew several criticisms, such as Nagel’s (1988) fairly harsh review of their original work; more recently, Feagin and Elias (2013) criticized racial formation theory from their perspective of “systemic racism theory,” stating that their theory was superior in several ways for analyzing white supremacy and group resistance to racism. This author, however, started graduate school in 2014 and read the updated 2015 version. I posit that with their renewed attention to racial inequality as historical, resilient, and durable, Omi and Winant’s work should not be written off as “not critical,” or more properly, the book should not be characterized as “incompatible with critical race theory.” Furthermore, it is inaccurate to say that Omi and Winant’s theory is inattentive to white supremacy and the potential for racial resistance; these concepts are foundational to their take on racial formation and the clash between racial democracy versus racial despotism. For what it’s worth, I agree with Omi and Winant’s (2013) response to Feagin and Elias; discussing what Feagin and Elias wrote, they state that, “their essay has an overly tendentious tone and sometimes misreads and misinterprets our book” (961).

Nevertheless, I do see ways racial formation theory can be advanced with a critical emphasis on understanding the durability of white supremacy and racial despotism even after years of sustained social movements and mobilization in pursuit of racial justice and racial democracy. Specifically, I'd like to sharpen and operationalize the process of "rearticulation" with a critical understanding of how rearticulation occurs within an ongoing social dialectic of challenging versus insulating racial hierarchy; rearticulation is a sword that can cut both ways, but the agents of racial despotism have often wielded it better than the agents of racial democracy. Critical race theory as a whole would benefit from a sharper analytical consideration and development of how the historicized-yet-contemporary workings of certain keywords, language, discourse, and ideologies have worked and continue to work to defend racial hierarchy; essentially, understanding the process of *rearticulation* has important scholarly significance. With this in mind, I now turn to my discussion of how I draw on a Foucaultian perspective and Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory within this project. I use such ideas to construct an analytical vocabulary to describe the processes within Omi and Winant's "rearticulation." Overall, this framework is a scholarly contribution relevant to studying how critical research about how keywords, meanings, and discourses are implicated in the ongoing clash between racial democracy and racial despotism.

Poststructuralist Theory: Genealogical Approach and Discourse Theory

In my first chapter, I first present a genealogy of diversity discourse in the USA to illustrate how the evolution of the keyword "diversity" is reflective of historical racial contestation and competing racial projects. The second and third chapters consider the nature of diversity discourse today by studying diversity attitudes in the American

imagination and by analyzing diversity discourse in media texts. Thus, I am systematically considering both historical and contemporary diversity discourse USA as relevant to racial contestation, as well as general political-ideological cleavages. But, just what is a "discourse" anyway?

Most scholars would agree that there is no single or best way to undertake a discourse analysis. I purposefully chose specific perspectives that I believe best fit this analysis. Thus, my project reflects genealogical and poststructuralist understanding of "discourse" from Foucault. I heavily draw upon Ernesto Laclau and Chantel Mouffe; political scientists influenced by Althusser and Gramsci, they also share Foucault's poststructuralist perspective. Importantly, their "discourse theory" provides a poststructuralist vocabulary I use to describe the evolution of diversity discourse in the USA. Working towards my theory of "racialized keywords, concepts and vocabulary from poststructuralist discourse theory can strengthen Omi and Winant's concept of *rearticulation,* a synthesis which can provide a sharper analytical framework for studying how certain keywords and discourses become imbued with new ideological and normative meaning that relate to competing racial projects and the trajectory of racial politics. Based on digging and perusing the world of academic search engines, I am confident that this is a fairly original theoretical contribution. Below, I turn to describing poststructuralist theory in more detail.

To, it is important to situate poststructuralism as different from previous theories and philosophies that had dominated academic literature before to the mid-20th century. I believe a discussion of Michel Foucault's influence illustrates the character of poststructuralism; I primarily work off his famous *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault 1975)

and *History of Sexuality* (Foucault 1984). Among Foucault's many ideas and notable contributions is his discussion of the "genealogical approach," which critiques teleological approaches to the social sciences. Whereas some authors such as Hegel and Marx attempted to uncover fundamental "truths" about humanity by analyzing specific social trajectories, Foucault's approach does not see such reasoning as epistemologically sound. He critiques this thinking as the efforts of previous authors to impose their own beliefs about fundamental human "truths" into their work. Therefore, Foucault's genealogical and archaeological approach has a specific epistemology, based on making substantive conclusions by comparing and contrasting different discourses, subjects, and historical contexts. This approach places primacy on the possibilities for societies to construct their own historically contingent realities. With this in mind, Foucault's concept of "discourse" is one of many aspects of the social construction of cultural norms, material relations, and social life, a process which Foucault states must be explored through analysis of historical trajectories, social environments, and the construction of "knowledge" and dominant ways of thinking.

Foucault uses the term "episteme" to describe historicized systems of socially-constructed knowledge. In my view, this entire project is based on understanding the development of diversity discourse within a socially-dominant episteme that has insulated and protected white supremacy. I imagine most other critical race theorists would agree. In fact, Foucaultian genealogy and archaeology is actually one of the foundational premises of critical race theory. Notable scholars in CRT, Delgado and Stefancic (2017) describe the influence of Foucault's work on the formation and solidification of critical race theory's early stages, stating that his work—alongside other European thinkers such

as Antonio Gramsci and Jacques Derrida—has influenced how critical race theory interrogates the construction of knowledge-epistemes that shape racial hierarchy.

Foucault describes the evolution of Western penal systems and norms surrounding sexuality. Each of these examples gives a chance to consider the concept of "discourse," which is an evolution of semiotics' emphasis on studying language and words as shared cultural symbols which speak to underlying human organization. Though Foucault is not interested in uncovering foundational ideas about "the human" as Levi-Strauss and Saussure within semiotics theory, he states that a socially constructed "discourse" is more than just a shared understanding embedded in text or words; discourses construct the social subjects of their episteme. Stuart Hall (1980) describes Foucault's shift from *semiotics* to *discourse* an important transition in the development of what we know today as poststructuralist discourse. There are two key takeaways behind Foucault's development of Saussure's linguistics: (a) as opposed to earlier semiotics' assumption of a single, immutable social structure, poststructuralist discourse doesn't assume such an overarching structure exists, and (b) the construction of society through *discourse* is more comprehensive process than Saussurian semiotics, touching on the social construction of major, overarching knowledge(s) as reflective of deeply embedded power-relations and the impacts o historical social development.

"Discourse" is one of Foucault's most influential ideas. This term combines semiotics' focus on language structures and signs with the Foucaultian understanding of episteme and the relationship between knowledge, power, and social structure. "Discourse" captures the social process wherein ideas become hegemonic within a particular episteme. Discourses structure systems of meaning within socially

contextualized knowledges by shaping the social process wherein particular meanings gain the status of "truth." Discourses capture the bounds of reality and conceptions of truth within the system of meaning that is defined by knowledge, "truth," and representations. Thus, discourses are more than shared symbols or language; they are expressions of knowledge which constitute the bounds of social action, social reality, and power in the Foucaultian approach.

Discourses both define socially understood "truths" and are key components to Foucault's take on "power." In Foucault's conception power is more than the domination of some over others, and instead speaks to the very capability of social actors to act in their society. "Discourses," such as those surrounding surveillance and punishment or those which define some sexuality as deviant, both reify dominant social hierarchies and constrain the ways that social actors live their lives by unevenly distributing power. Thus, discourses structure systems of meaning by shaping the social process wherein particular meanings gain the status of "truth" or "knowledge." Discourses are malleable social constructions which define meaning and speak to epistemes of "truth," contingent on social contexts (Keller 2013; Power 2011). Following Foucault's influence, Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) describe how most contemporary approaches to discourse analysis take a "constructionist approach," wherein the social construction of meaning is seen as a discursive process

Though Foucault does not share Gramsci's Marxist orientation towards the nature of social life and human existence, his ideas surrounding discourse, power, and epistemes are comparable to Gramsci's take on "hegemony," a term and concept which is a mainstay in the social sciences today. In several publications, Stuart Hall has discussed

Foucault and Gramsci's ideas as compatible, particularly for scholarly focus on how dominant beliefs and ideologies come to be, and the potential for hegemonic beliefs or discourses to be challenged and replaced (Hall 1980; Hall 1986).Thus, both Foucault's "discourse" and Gramsci's "hegemony" are attentive to how knowledge and common beliefs are generally reflective of power hierarchies, but also that common knowledge can change and be replaced. This is particularly relevant to how Omi and Winant themselves draw on Foucault and Gramsci in their own work, which gives me confidence in bringing Foucault into conversation with racial formation theory.

This compatibility is also important for my usage Laclau and Mouffe's "discourse theory," a poststructuralist, Marxist-influenced framework for understanding how discourses evolve and become prevalent, meaningful, and powerful in social contexts. Their discourse theory sees social life as shaped by discursive struggle, wherein dominant discourses must be reified and are constantly challenged by non-dominant discourses within the broader social episteme. Thus, meaning and social life are contingent upon the evolution of discourses and the ways that different discourses coincide or clash with dominant, hegemonic systems. Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory devotes a significant amount of time to explaining how certain representations, or "signs," become imbued with meaning and are deployed by competing discourses that are in perpetual struggle to solidify the meanings that they attach to various signs.

Although more-so contemporaries of Foucault than influenced by his work, Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory shares Foucault's poststructuralist perspective of seeing social life as shaped by discursive struggle, wherein dominant discourses must be reified and are constantly challenged by non-dominant discourses within the broader

social episteme (Jorgensen and Philipps 2002). There are many aspects to Laclau and Mouffe's work that I don't fully draw upon, such as their focus on group-identity formation and their attention to developing a post-Marxist perspective about social movements and the pursuit of a transnational democratic equality. Such themes are important to their theory's purpose and utility, but they are not necessarily hyper-relevant to my project. The aspects of "discourse theory" that are most relevant to this project are Laclau and Mouffe's poststructuralist understanding of how discourse, meaning, and taken-for-granted "truths" are ever-fluid, socially constructed, and influenced by issues of power and inequality, which provides a vocabulary for understanding how changing meanings and temporal shifts among different signs leads to the rise and fall of different discourses. Laclau and Mouffe's poststructuralist discourse theory is generally linked to their famous 1985 book titled *Hegemony and Socialist Structure*. I have read this work, but in my explanation and application of their theoretical framework, I primarily cite from other, more-recent sources that provide overviews of several approaches in discourse analysis.

Laclau and Mouffe's approach to discourse theory has a particularly sociological character. Jorgensen and Philipps (2002) write that Laclau and Mouffe's "discourse theory aims at an understanding of the social as a discursive construction whereby, in principle, all social phenomena can be analysed using discourse analytical tools" (2). This theory sees the concept of "discourse" on a level of primacy and salience which, to put it sociologically, acts as a major driver of important dimensions of social life such as structure, identity, and agency. Discourse is a social force, and is socially constructed.

This perspective fits well with critical race theory and Omi and Winant's renewed emphasis on the role of racial meanings and historical racism as a structuring, generative force upon social life in the contemporary USA. Laclau and Mouffe's ideas are also based on conceiving of social struggle and competing social agendas as highly important to social life, which I see as conceptually compatible with racial formation theory's attention to how social life in the USA is interwoven with competing racial projects and the interplay between racial democracy versus racial democracy. Finally, but importantly, discourse theory fits well with my project because discourse theory aims to "map out (a) the processes in which we struggle about the way in which the meaning of signs is to be fixed, and (b) the processes by which some fixations of meaning become so conventionalised that we think of them as natural" (Jorgensen & Philipps p. 2; list-notation added). The former point is reflective of how diversity was historically popularized and is now being rearticulated as related to the trajectory of racial politics and ongoing racial contestation in the USA. The second point, which I reflect on more so in my conclusion, is that the natural, taken-for-granted quality of "diversity" as we know it in America is itself reflective of a centuries-old social construction we also take for granted: "race." What may have *diversity* come to mean in a world not founded on post-colonial hierarchies of racism? Overall, discourse theory is well suited to explaining how a particular mainstream discourse is maintained, modified, and challenged within socially historicized epistemes, making it a natural fit for studying the evolution of diversity discourse in the American cultural lexicon,

Importantly, in the poststructuralist tradition, discourse theory considers how discourses compete with one another in process of meaning-making in ways that reflect

social relations of power. Thus, Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory is intertwined with their understanding of the social world, and their emphasis on moving past the traditional Marxist tradition of solely focusing on class stratification as a determinative force in society. Jacobs (2018) states that Laclau and Mouffe "viewed Antonio Gramsci's idea of cultural hegemony as the culmination of this shift" (296). In their writings, they build on Gramsci's ideas, such as the concept of hegemony and the idea of traditional versus organic intellectuals, to provide a post-Marxist perspective on how powerful groups (including, but not limited to, capitalist elites) maintain their dominance. This approach fits well with Omi and Winant's own understanding and application of Gramsci's "hegemony," which is quite important to their own ideas and their concept of "racial politics" as described above. Overall, "Laclau and Mouffe's concept of 'discourse' encompasses not only language but all social phenomena" (Jorgensen and Philipps 2005, p. 9). Thus, like Foucault, Laclau and Mouffe present a social constructionist perspective that draws on poststructuralist logic to say that all social realities and social processes, even those we think of as strictly material, have a discursive aspect and are shaped by the rise and fall of different discourses.

In this project, these ideas are relevant to a critical understanding of how diversity discourse reflects and impacts America's episteme of racial ideology, wherein many racialized discourses have upheld white supremacy despite historical challenges and resistance. As their theory combines Marxism with a poststructuralist framework, Laclau and Mouffe's build on the concept of *hegemony* as described by Antonio Gramsci, which applies to the discussion of "fixations of meaning" that are so taken-for-granted they seem natural. But, while hegemonic discourse is often wide-ranging, entrenched, and

supported by institutional logics that favor the powerful, all meaning and discourse in society exists in relation to other meaning and discourse, which is subject to change. Essentially, hegemonies aren't necessarily ironclad or immortal. Laclau and Mouffe's theory is thusly a social constructionist perspective that sees the meaning-making process of discourse creation as driven by social forces, drawing analytical attention to the potential for hegemonic discourses to be challenged and replaced.

I should note that my project frequently uses the term "ideology" as well. Within sociology and general social science, the term can mean different things. For clarity, I provide a useful definition from Macionis and Gerber's textbook *Sociology (*2010), which defines ideology as "cultural beliefs that justify particular social arrangements, including patterns of inequality." This definition is useful for considering how the discourses relevant to this project generally fall in line with long-standing ideological conflict in the US, reflective of the contemporary evolution and new manifestation of our historical "culture wars" (Hunter 1991; Hartman 2019). I see discourses as having an ideological quality; the intensity and normativity can differ greatly even among related discourses, and many discourses of substantive importance pursue a particular agenda or social vision that can be understood in the context of warring ideologies and social struggle. I note this here because experts will know that Laclau and Mouffe themselves shy away from the concept of "ideology." One of their terms which I don't greatly use, *objectivity*, is used to discuss how certain understandings of truth and meaning become seen as natural, constituting what sociologists might refer to as "ideology" or "ideological beliefs." Jorgensen and Philipps discuss how Laclau and Mouffe's eschewing of the word ideology is a product of academic conversations among their contemporaries. Therefore,

in order to properly study the story of diversity discourse in conversation with existing literature and sociological terminology, I myself use the term "ideology" regularly in this project.

Laclau and Mouffe's theorization is particularly useful for operationalizing the process by which discourses become meaningful in socially impactful ways, a process they see occurring within a field of social struggle and amidst a potential infinite-number of possible meanings. Several authors have discussed how, despite its theoretical richness, Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory does have some slight logical or terminological gray areas; therefore, my discussion of their vocabulary is guided by Jorgensen and Philipps' illustration of these concepts, as well as their own addition to the vocabulary (with an asterisk below). I use these terms to describe the historical evolution, contemporary nature, and potential future of "diversity" discourse in the USA, and my project's primary theoretical contribution is to operationalize Omi and Winant's *rearticulation* with the vocabulary of discourse theory, listed below. All quotes are from Jorgensen and Philipps, Chapter Two, "Laclau and Mouffe's Discourse Theory." I use these terms throughout the dissertation, so I've arranged them as a glossary below for ease of readers' reference. This typology below is my own original creation, albeit highly informed by the different publications I've cited above and other resources besides. Laclau and Mouffe have a large (and complicated!) vocabulary, which I break down into three main categories.

First, in solo a category on its own, I discuss Laclau and Mouffe's definition of *discourse.* Generally speaking, social scientists and cultural studies scholars understand *discourse* as a cultural belief, argument, and/or idea with some significance for our social

world. But, from there, there is a myriad of definitional, analytical, and empirically-oriented differences among what could be considered theory or research about "discourse." Amidst this veritable cacophony, I believe that Laclau and Mouffe's definition of a discourse serves to flesh out one of my main empirical points and substantive contributions to the diversity discourse literature in sociology: "diversity" as we know it has a mainstream consensus and shared ethos, but it is currently experiencing discursive change that is reflective of competing racial projects in the USA. In this vein, Laclau and Mouffe's definition of "discourse" reflects a general attention to the fixed, hegemonic aspect of the meanings within discourse while also acknowledging that discourses are ever-fluid and hold many potential, untapped meanings that could be relevant to our society.

Based on their conceptualization of "discourse," the other categories of terms within the Laclau and Mouffe vocabulary reflect attention to a general process of how discourses become meaningful over time. Therefore, I see two clusters for sorting the remaining terms: those related to (a) how signs gain meaning, which I clump together with my application of the term "keywords" (Williams 1976), and (b) the temporality of how meanings and discourses evolve in a social context. This is not a comprehensive, exhaustive list of Laclau and Mouffe's the terms that appear in Laclau and Mouffe's writings; I imagine some experts in this area may frown that I have not included terms such as *myth, objectivity*, *identity*, and *chains of equivalence* in this dissertation. It would be a poor show, however, to jam as much as possible from Laclau and Mouffe's theory into this project solely for the sake of being extra- comprehensive. Therefore, I draw on

concepts that I feel best sharpen Omi and Winant's concept of "rearticulation," which I discuss following my illustration of the vocabulary.

Discourse

Discourse: "The fixation of meaning a particular domain" (Jorgensen and Philipps 2005: p. 3). In discourse theory, a *discourse* is comprised of several connected signs whose meanings are constructed in relation. In addition to operationalizing how discourses fix meanings to signs, discourse theory also considers how this process occurs over time and within social contexts, with emphasis on social struggle as a generative force in the coming-and-going of different discourses within particular topic domains.

Jorgensen and Philipps use a metaphor of a *discourse* as akin to a fishing net; the individual knots are a series of connected and relationally-meaningful signs. Just like the knots in a fishing net, the different signs work in tandem and are essentially constructed by one another's proximity, position, and relative tensile strength. Within the language of this metaphor, social context and social struggle over time play a role in weaving or tearing apart the net.

Jorgensen and Philipps provide the example of competing discourses in the medical domain such as Western medicine versus ayurveda or homeopathy; these competing discourses attempt to fix different meanings to similar, relevant signs such as "health," "body," and "medicine;" e.g., Western medicine's conceptualization of the body as a series of organs and parts is different than some philosophies which consider the body as a series of holistic connections of energy.

Signs and Meaning {"Keywords"}

Sign: Discourse theory draws on a general understanding of *signs* that is shared across earlier Saussurian semiotics and later approaches to discourses. Signs are

small representations and/or communicative objects; a document or a page of text itself is not a sign, but a collection of many different signs. Following the linguistic focus within semiotics origins of discourse theory and discourse analysis overall, signs are often conceived as terms and words, and that framework guides this dissertation. Generally speaking, however, signs can also be symbols, visual representations, and other objects. As Jacobs (2018) writes, this understanding of signs is "is heavily indebted to structuralist, Saussurian linguistics: a sign is meaningful because it is part of a network of other signs, which all bestow each other with meaning" (299).

Element: This term generally refers to all signs that exist in a society and that could become relevant to and exist within certain discourses. A discourse has many elements, albeit not all of them share similar salience or substantive importance within a discourse. Rather, elements become more important as they gain meaning and are deployed by different discourses within a particular domain. Elements are the starting point for signs that become more meaningful and substantively-salient to particular topic domains and the relevant discourses.

Moments: The fixation of meaning to a particular sign within a particular topic domain; when an element begins to matter within the context of a discourse. Therefore, discourses are comprised of moments, i.e. signs that gain and lose meanings within the context of their use. Elements become moments when they are articulated within a particular discourse as relevant to that topic domain. There is potential for conceptual confusion here; note that I place the term *moment* within the cluster of terms related to signs and meaning, not temporality and social context.

Floating Signifier: Signs that do not have a fixed meaning, but are open to interpretation depending on different discourses and beliefs at work. Generally, most signs exist as floating signifiers, although some are of more import than others. Different discourses and efforts at *articulation* (see below) seek to wrestle some control and fixation-of-meaning upon floating signifiers, meaning many play dual roles in related but diametrically-opposed discourses and ideological

struggle. For example, the words "rights," "democracy," and "equality" are oft-used buzzwords by both the political Right and Left, but their meanings and discursive deployments are drastically different across such conversations, reflective of these groups' ideological goals of fixing meaning to these buzzwords. Some authors who explore Laclau and Mouffe's work have referred to these as "*empty signifiers*" (but I will stay with the language in Jorgensen and Philipps).

Nodal Point: "A privileged sign around which other the other signs are ordered" (p3). All discourses are structured around certain nodal points, a particular group of signs that are extremely salient in the discourse; these would be the strongest, thickest, and most-central knots in the fishing net. Note that signs, moments, elements, floating signifiers, and nodal points are all similar concepts; each represents a sign being used in social contexts with different potential meanings. Discourses come and go as signs gain or lose meaning, i.e. as elements become moments, and then go on to potentially act as floating signifiers and/or nodal points. As Jacobs (2018) writes, "entering a central position in the discursive network, a nodal point empties itself of meaning in order to signify the signifiers around it." In discourses about "democracy," for example, that term itself is a fairly meaningless nodal point; different competing visions about what a democracy is or attempt to create various discourses by affixing meaning to different signs related to the democratic process, such as "Voting", "Rights," or "Justice."

Signifying Chains: Signs are only truly meaningful in relation to other signs and their own meanings. Thus, any discourse is built on a series of "signifying chains," wherein many signs and meanings come together within a discourse. A conservative discourse about "democracy" and a liberal discourse about "democracy" would each be comprised of *signifying chains* that connect their own meaningful understandings and articulations of signs such as "voting," "rights," and "justice" the nodal point and/or floating signifier of "democracy." While the meanings may be similar in some ways across the liberal versus the

conservative signifying chain, there would surely be some differences as well. The concept of "voter fraud," for example, is meaningfully interpreted in different ways after the 2020 election, and the various signifying chains associated with them may look quite different in a scholarly conference empirically demonstrating a the lack of voter fraud in the USA versus a conservative political rally where the headline speaker claims that rampant voter fraud cost Donald Trump the 2020 election.

Temporality and Social Context

Power: In a conceptualization that is reminiscent of Foucault, Laclau and Mouffe see power as "that which produces the social" (p12). Power is not solely a top-down, elite-controlled entity, but a generative force that all people, groups, and organizations have; of course, it does not exist in equal quantities across different social locations. Social actors exercise power when pursuing different agendas that impact our society. Power produces our social world, but therefore precludes other possibilities for what our society could be.

Articulation: Laclau and Mouffe themselves (p105) define this term as "any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice. The structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice, we will call discourse" (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: p 105). Articulations, and later rearticulations, represent when social actors attempt to fix meaning to different signs and forward a particular set of understandings in the struggle between competing discourses. Within this project, the various instances of ascribing new and important meanings to the keyword "diversity" can be seen as a series of connected, and sometimes competing, articulations, which in turned are followed by rearticulations.

Antagonism: General social struggles which often act as the spark or catalyst for discourse formation. Discourses themselves, particularly competing discourses, reflect social struggles that have antagonistic characteristics, e.g. how Western medicine and ayurveda compete for primacy over the meanings of terms within a

medical domain. Within this project, I see the clash between competing racial projects as different moments of antagonism that have shaped the evolution of diversity discourse. In my words, antagonism can be characterized as competing normativities and ideologies.

Closure: The temporary fixation of meaning to several interconnected signs, following the articulations and antagonisms that drive discourse formation. Closures are never permanent or set-in-stone, but they represent key temporal periods in which a discourse and its deployment of certain signs have achieved fairly stable meanings.

Field of Discursivity: Discourse theory posits that all signs, particularly floating signifiers that are exist in various discourses, have a near-infinite number of potential meanings. Only some of those meanings are realized and socially impactful. The *field of discursivity* represents the totality of potential meanings. If we were to conceive of the field of discursivity as a large square, various discourses would represent small, potentially-overlapping discourses within that square. Importantly, a large amount of surface area within the large square would not fall into the surface area within the small circles.

*Order of Discourse**: This term does not actually appear in Laclau and Mouffe's original vocabulary; Jorgensen and Philipps (2005) have introduced this concept to address some analytical and conceptual confusion in discourse theory. Specifically, it is difficult to consider the field of discursivity in ways that are of true substantive importance to research projects that use discourse theory. Consider that the terms "dog," "cat," and "fish" may have potentially-untapped meanings within the American cultural lexicon, but what good is that knowledge for my project about diversity discourse? Some other terms, however, such as "person," "identity," "equality," and "difference" are particularly relevant to diversity discourse, and they themselves have several different potential-meanings that are in competition to be achieved and articulated. Therefore, the *order of discourse* represents an intermediary in the field of discursivity, a sub-section of the large square that encompasses several smaller circles. This allows a researcher

to consider potential-meanings within a field of discursivity that actually matter to their project.

To make their case for introducing this term, Jorgensen and Philipps return to the example of competing medical discourses. Within the general field of discursivity, which is conceptualized as massive and near-infinite, various meanings of "body," "illness," and "treatment" compete. These terms would also be considered as part of the *order of discursivity* relevant to the domain of medicine. But, various meanings surrounding other terms such as "football" or "touchdown" are generally irrelevant to a research project about medical discourse (barring a project about football players' health or something similar). Irrelevant or unimportant terms' untapped, potential meanings are better conceptualized as within the field of discursivity but not within the order of discursivity. Therefore, orders of discursivity have to be understood as related to particular topic domains and signs that are relevant to certain related-but-competing discourses.

Sedimented Discourse: A discourse which has solidified; the elements and moments have accumulated over time, leading to important nodal features and/or the consistent attribution of particular meanings to various floating signifiers. Generally, a discourse must experience several moments of articulation and closure before it can be considered as a sedimented discourse. Sedimented discourses, particularly those that are battle-hardened and have thrashed many of their competitors, can be considered as conceptually related to Gramsci's hegemony; any discourse whose meanings are hegemonic, far-reaching, and taken-for-granted is a highly-developed sedimented discourse. Note, however, that no sedimented discourse is ever guaranteed to maintain its closure and fixated meanings eternally, even those that are powerful and hegemonic; Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory says that Davids always stand a chance against Goliaths.

To put the terms together, all *signs* exist with a near-infinite number of different realized and unrealized meanings in a social context. The totality of all signs and their potential meanings is the *field of discursivity*. Different discourses form based on how different signs are used and relevant within particular topic domains. All topic domains have an *order of discursivity*, a subset of the field of discursivity, within which the most relevant signs' and their meanings exist. From there, the signs become *elements*, and then *moments*, as certain signs become particularly salient in a topic domain, leading to the beginning of a discourse's formation. After more instances of *articulation*, driven by social struggle and competing agendas, a.k.a *antagonism*, the discourse grows stronger forms as key signs turn into *nodal points* around which a discourse is organized, although there is no hard rule stating that a discourse only has one central point. What matters more is how the nodal points of a particular discourse reside within *signifying chains* that associate that nodal point with other signs in a series of relational meanings. Ultimately, the struggle for control of signs, meaning, and discourse is a series of *antagonisms* and *articulations* which battle to control highly-variable, highly-salient nodal points (*floating signifiers*) and the *signifying chains* related to those nodal points as relevant to particular topic domains.

Those discourses that are most-developed and built upon taken-for-granted fixations of meaning are known as *sedimented discourse.* Of course, after a few centuries of social existence, nascent discourses today do not form in a vacuum, but must scrap their way to the top within a veritable bloodbath of stronger and more-experienced foes; those enemy gladiators often serve competing ideologies and agendas that are odds with the rookie fighters. And, undoubtedly, the betting odds favor the experienced warriors.

Laclau and Mouffe's original ideas were written with emphasis on pursuing social equalities in the face of state oppression and social hierarchies. Thus, discourse theory acknowledges that *Power* is unequally distributed among our social life, a product of social structure and inequalities, but no discourse or social actor is truly powerless in the poststructuralist tradition; some of the rookie fighters have a chance of becoming champions.

As stated above, I do not adhere to every conceptual term in Laclau and Mouffe, especially as some of their terms are not greatly relevant to my dissertation; Laclau and Mouffe's work has some specific focus on identity and group formation, which is not necessarily at the heart of the current project. That said, the general attention to how discourses construct identity fits like a glove upon the social-construction-of-race perspective, which I feel strengthens my case that critical race theory could stand to gain by applying my synthesis of rearticulation and discourse theory. This joint-typology allows a researcher to operationalize how different competing discourses distort existing meanings associated with some keywords in ways that reflect the ongoing clash between racial democracy and racial despotism. This is relevant to projects such as mine which deal with rearticulations of discourses and keywords on a widespread cultural level across society, as well as other CRT projects that consider how certain identities are constructed or racialized, i.e., the historical racialization of the Irish or Polish as "white" versus the racialization of West-Indian afro-groups as "black." And, I should note that the concept of identity formation is not wholly irrelevant to my dissertation; as I return to in my conclusion. Early and contemporary versions of diversity discourse position several identities as relevant or irrelevant to the concept of "diversity," essentially meaning that

different diversity discourses are part of the general social contexts that discursively constructs those identities. All in all, Laclau and Mouffe add a lot to this project, and potentially to critical race theory overall.

A challenge for unpacking discourse theory's extensive vocabulary is that there a number of different terms that deal have to do with signs; their fuzzy distinctions are only made worse by discourse theory's emphasis on conceptualizing how different signs can change from *elements* to *moments* to *nodal points* (and some go on to become other concepts from the vocabulary). Impermanence and fluidity is a key characteristic of signs, meaning that progression described above could move in different directions, sliding back and forth! Therefore, my project intentionally uses the term *keyword* to refer to signs of import and relevance without getting lost in the details of signs' ever-changing status within Laclau and Mouffe's terminology.

Inspired by Raymond Williams (1976), I see "keyword" as a blanket term to refer to signs that have particular salience in different topic domains, and the same keyword can exist differently in varying discourses. Williams discusses several words in Anglican-English that are highly important and meaningful in social contexts, but are difficult to define and ultimately mean different things to different social actors; examples include "culture," "art," "nature," "radical," and "society." Williams explores how these terms' historical origins and contemporary uses are not necessarily identical, but can change depending on social shifts and competing civic visions. This account is in line with discourse theory's attention to how signs gain and lose meanings depending on social context. Therefore, I feel the term "keyword" helps to classify the sliding scale and amorphous, inter-connected nature of Laclau and Mouffe's terms such as *sign*, *nodal*

point, and *floating signifier*; ultimately, all these terms deal with important words whose meaning and relational-identity changes as discourses come and go.

To apply my use of *keyword* within the vocabulary discussed in this chapter, "diversity" is a keyword. It serves an important nodal point whose meaning is interpreted and deployed in the context of diversity discourses, mainstream, new, and even yet-to-truly-exist, if we apply discourse theory's perspective. In contrast to *discourse,* which is an overarching argument that reflects different meanings, understandings, and social beliefs together, I see a *keyword* is a singular semantic, semiotic entity. As discussed above, Jorgensen and Philipps (2002) use the metaphor of a fishing net to describe a discourse. The discourse itself is the entirety of the net, while the individual knots represent different signs with specific meanings; just like in a fishing net, the knots (the different signs) gain their different meanings and strength in relation to one another. Therefore, when I describe diversity as a keyword, I am referring to the word itself as an important sign, a nodal point or floating signifier within the fishing net. When I describe diversity *discourses*, I am referring to different configurations of the keyword "diversity" with other knots in the fishing net. Thus, the keyword "diversity" is an important structuring point for diversity discourses, which themselves are not a monolithic entity or set.

This dissertation argues that there are at least three versions of diversity discourse in the USA. The fishing nets, if they were stacked atop one another, would have a lot of overlap and each would be built around a central knot (the keyword diversity). However, the shape, size, and spacing of the other knots in the fishing net would not exactly match across different diversity discourses; the nets are similar but not identical. Discourse

theory also tells us that any diversity discourse is naturally built upon other keywords that are associated with certain meanings and other discourse; these are other floating signifiers with variable meanings, or other "knots" in the fishing net. This means that mainstream diversity discourse and nascent, contemporary rearticulations are dependent upon a deep-rooted cultural schema of race and ideological clashes of racial contestation. These other keywords themselves could have entire dissertations written about them, as these keywords are also highly influenced by and influential upon racial contestation in the USA; examples include "immigration," "welfare," and "affirmative action,"

Thus, in addition to Omi and Winant's terminology, I use my configuration of Laclau and Mouffe's vocabulary to describe the historical evolution, contemporary nature, and potential future of diversity discourse in the USA. This is my theoretical contribution: providing a more systematic theoretical and analytical framework for studying the phenomenon of "rearticulation" from a critical-race-theory perspective. The book *Racial Formation* itself is influenced by Laclau and Mouffe; Omi and Winant cite these authors in several places throughout the 2015 version and in their other works, e.g. "Resistance is Futile?" (2013), a response to Feagin and Elias' criticisms of the earlier versions of the publication. Thus, using Laclau and Mouffe's ideas within racial formation theory isn't necessarily a wholly new idea on its own, but I believe I offer a more detailed and original illustration of how the vocabulary of discourse theory can develop "rearticulation" as analytical framework, one that goes much further down this rabbit hole that Omi and Winant's writings themselves.

Though my project and theory is based on Laclau and Mouffe's work, I should mention critical discourse analysis (CDA) as popularized by Norman Fairclough, a

common perspective is social science that features in several publications I draw upon for methodological guidance in my textual analysis chapter. CDA shares discourse theory's emphasis on highlighting the intersections of discourses, dominant ways of thinking, and the socially-constructed episteme. Furthermore, critical discourse analysis shares discourse theory's understanding of discourse as constituted by and constitutive of social processes. The primary differences between Laclau and Mouffe and CDA authors such as Norman Fairclough and Teun A. van Dijk is in their conceptualization of how discourse relates to hegemonic domination. Laclau and Mouffe's theories see discursive struggle as a social constant and thus leave a theoretical opening to suggest strategies of resistance and changing meanings which are driven by the ever-in-flux nature of the field of discourse. CDA doesn't necessarily deny that discourses are fluid or that resistance is possible, but authors in this tradition generally focus on the linguistic roots of "discourse" and how language structures social relations; structural theories generally see social change as slow-moving and difficult, a more concrete take on the ways discourse solidifies social reality than Laclau and Mouffe's hyper deconstructionism. Thus, CDA uses an interdisciplinary approach to describe how language discursively constitutes social reality with a critical eye to power and domination. Overall, however, both critical discourse analysis and discourse theory are based on Foucault's ideas about how discursive representations determine the social distribution of power, dominant ways of thinking, and social norms which dictate governance (Jorgensen and Philips 2002; Torfing 2005; Hindness 2012). A CDA perspective is beneficial to discuss in this project because my textual analysis is fully rooted in empirically studying the linguistic

properties of the texts; that said, most of my project's substantive interpretation and explanatory writing regarding "discourse" works off Laclau and Mouffe's vocabulary.

My project shows that diversity discourse is built upon shared-but-revisable meanings that have been associated with the keyword "diversity," and that diversity discourse works to reify other racialized keywords, discourses, and ideologies that maintain the salience of race and resilience of racial hierarchy in the USA. This project considers the keyword "diversity" and diversity discourse as historically and contemporary shaped by social struggle, based on the general backdrop of the racial contestation in the USA, informed by racial formation theory and discourse theory. But, my theoretical synthesis of Omi and Winant's rearticulation and Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory, with a nod to Raymond Williams, could be applicable outside this project. I posit that the process of "rearticulation" as discussed by Omi and Winant needs greater operationalization, and that my project presents an analytical framework that could help write those other dissertations about the meanings and consequences of other racialized keywords such as "immigration" or "welfare" in an America defined by ongoing, resilient racial hierarchy. By applying terms such as *keyword*, *closure*, *antagonism*, and *order of discourse*, sociologists from a CRT background can better explore how certain meanings and signs become distorted, revised, and rearticulated, with an emphasis on the generative force of racial contestation as a discursive social struggle. By developing this framework, we could chart and investigate an important, historically repetitive and recurring maneuver within the overall resilience of white supremacy. Indeed, I hope to move towards an overarching study, a book I'd title "Racialized Keywords," based on the work I'm doing for this dissertation.

I return to this theme throughout the dissertation, but I believe my project and mixed-methods analysis illustrates several ways wherein critical race theory could stand to gain by drawing on this theory, both theoretically and methodologically. Studying racialized keywords allows us to consider the processes by which rearticulation occurs with more detail, allowing us to capture the moments when epistimes change and the impacts of such shifts. A synthesis of the Foucaultian perspective, the premise of discourse theory, and the tenets of critical race theory suggest America's changing racial landscape and the overall trajectory of racial politics during this time period have been and continue to be foundationally constitutive to the entirety of our social life and society as we know it.

Drawing on Foucault's ideas, the concepts of the "episteme" and "power" illustrate that meanings and discourses constitute our social life. The different meanings associated with commonly-recognized signs, and the unequal distribution of power among social actors, creates the very knowledge, ideologies, and material conditions that define our social world and lives we live within it. Similarly, the poststructuralist perspective of Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory is built on conceptualizing that the social world is shaped by articulations, antagonisms, and the struggle between different discourses, a process which not only shapes meaning and ideological beliefs but also the material, economic, and physical aspects of social life. Then, racial formation theory, as well as other perspectives associated with critical race theory such as "systemic racism" (Feagin and Elias 2013), highlight how the social construction of race and racial hierarchy has been instrumental to the very construction of our social world from its earliest inceptions in the post-Renaissance, colonial era. Thus, my theory of racialized

keywords, which I explicate in this genealogical account of "diversity" in post-Civil Rights USA, contributes to a shared theoretical perspective on the generative social forces which constitute our society. As my account demonstrates, in line with existing scholarship, the history which has shaped the racialized keyword "diversity" has generally created our social world and the USA as we know it today. On a broader level, the theory and analytic perspective of "racialized keyword" can prove an entry point into studying the historical and contemporary processes by which racial contestation constitutes our social life; not only do racialized keywords shape the nature of racial identity and racial inequality, but they have driven the ideological and cultural cleavages that shape our American social world.

I've described the scope of the project and how the evolution of mainstream diversity discourse has been shaped by a backdrop of racial contestation, as well as how diversity discourse today is being rearticulated in ways that hold potential to challenge or support racial hierarchy. I have discussed my theoretical framework and contribution, but I have described the project's research design only briefly. Therefore, I now turn to my methods section. In my historical-genealogical chapters, my account of the growth of "diversity" illustrates how the vocabulary described in this chapter can analyze, interpret, and explain the process of historical and ongoing process of rearticulation with a critical emphasis on highlighting and challenging racial hierarchy. To expand on this theoretical framework as an analytic tool, my other chapters contribute to this theorization with finding from contemporary survey data and textual analysis, showing studying "diversity" through the framework of a single keyword in the context of meanings, other

keywords, and competing discourses that are relevant to racial hierarchy in the USA. With this in mind, I now turn to my methods section.

Project Methods

My mixed-methods project draws on genealogical analysis, analysis of survey data, and content analysis based on both quantitative and qualitative methods. This mixed-methods project can provide for a holistic, well-rounded understanding of diversity discourse, triangulating empirical conclusions and substantive interpretations by approaching one fundamental research question from multiple angles. My fundamental research question, simply put, is, "What is the past, present, and future of diversity discourse in the USA today?"

Within that overarching question, each of the substantive portions of the project addresses aspects of this question from various angles, providing a different element to the overall analysis. First the genealogical analysis describes the "past" of diversity discourse, charting the rise of the keyword diversity within institutional and social settings as driven by competing social beliefs within a changing episteme. The genealogy also focuses on the "present," highlighting how mainstream diversity discourse today, which is near-hegemonic in scope, reflects ideological underpinnings of contemporary racial hierarchy. The analysis of survey data provides another understanding of diversity discourse in the "present," showing key themes in Americans' diversity attitudes while also highlighting potential cleavages and social rifts underneath the consensus; such rifts fall along racial, political and ideological fault lines in American society that are highly relevant to contemporary racial contestation. The textual analysis chapter explores how

the “present” of diversity discourse exhibits commonalities and differences in different texts from news media sources across the political spectrum. This is also where I more thoroughly explore some of the ideas regarding the “future” of diversity discourse, particularly new directions and rearticulations which will be embedded in political ideology and competing racial projects in the coming future in the USA. Below, I turn to more specific considerations regarding data and methods for the different sections of the project.

Historical-Genealogy Chapter

. The first substantive chapter details the historical evolution of the keyword “diversity” and the growth of what we know today as mainstream diversity discourse; this history is situated within the broader backdrop of changing policies, norms, cultural beliefs, and hierarchies related to race in the USA. This account is primarily informed by understandings and timelines I acquired by reading the existing literature’s account of major moments, supplemented by my fairly original discussion of how the story of diversity discourse is intertwined with the history of racial formation and the trajectory of racial politics in the USA. I discuss major events that solidified the meanings, norms, and ideological axioms of the floating signifier “diversity” (Laclau & Mouffe), focusing on large cultural moments such as Supreme Court cases, elite discourse in institutional settings, and the valorization of diversity discourse by famous figures, such as those cited at the beginning of this chapter. A history of competing discourses, articulation, and closure (Laclau and Mouffe 1985) in the context of racial formation and racial contestation (Omi and Winant 2014) shaped the discourse(s) associated with the keyword “diversity,”

The genealogical chapters study "diversity" in the context of three periods within the trajectory of racial politics. I demarcated and frame the first two of these periods based Omi and Winant's work. They describe the (a) a post-WWII rise of anti-racist discourse and social movements that culminated in the Civil Rights movement, followed by backlash and the Southern Strategy, and then (b) the neoliberal turn during the Reagan and Clinton era, which culminated with the prominence of post-racial ideology and colorblind racism in the early 2000's and the 2008 Obama election with its corresponding post-racial triumphalism (Logan 2011). Then, the third period I discuss is more of an original idea, albeit highly informed by contemporary social science and critical race theory, in which we have entered a period of "racial neopopulism." Contemporary politics and the "culture wars" are based on more social attention and recognition of racial difference, albeit that can range from progressive clarion calls such as #blacklivesmatter to the explicit bigotry, prejudice, and xenophobia which shapes the contemporary face of the GOP as a party of white populism. Therefore, this genealogical chapter does have a bit of a "future" focus as well, This genealogy also has a forward facing nature, considering how nascent rearticulations of "diversity" will work upon the trajectory of racial politics, a relevant consideration as the USA continues to become more ethnoracially diverse yet racial inequality and racial hierarchy still define our society. As my genealogical chapters describe, diversity discourse evolved in the context of these three periods, and as we move through the third in the near-future, we will see a change in what we know as diversity discourse in the context of contemporary political, ideological, and racial contestation.

Survey Analysis Chapter

My survey analysis is based on exploring nationally representative survey data, the Boundaries in the American Mosaic (BAM) dataset. Based on descriptive statistics, crosstabs, regressions, and factor analysis, my exploration of the BAM survey illustrate that the ways Americans think about "diversity" have many implications for racial attitudes and racial hierarchy. Furthermore, political ideology represents an important fulcrum upon which diversity discourse is balanced and leveraged. Much of this work comes from my time as research assistant for the American Mosaic Project; I worked with the BAM for most of my graduate career, and studying the key survey items about "diversity" basically raised my fledgling career; I am personally very grateful for the project and the individuals on the research team.

The survey was contracted through the survey research firm GfK, formerly called KnowledgeNetworks. The survey was designed and funded by the University of Minnesota American Mosaic Project with grant-funding from the National Science Foundation. The survey was fielded during a two-week period in early 2014. Participants were selected from GfK's nationally-representative panel sampling frame, which is compiled based on probability-based random address sampling from U.S. postal service records. GfK recruited respondents in English and Spanish-speaking households through direct mail, telephone follow-up, and online registration (Couper 2017). Respondents completed the survey electronically over the Internet; when necessary, GfK provided laptops to households where respondents did not have the necessary technology to access and complete the survey on its electronic platform. Participant compensation was offered as a cash incentive or a credit for computer and Internet access. The recruitment rate for this primary sample was 13.9%, and the profile rate was 64.1%.

From there, the BAM sample was drawn from panel members using a probability proportional to size (PPS) weighted sampling approach. 4,353 people were contacted, leading to a total of 2,521 valid responses completed, including two over-samples of 400+ African American and 400+ Hispanic respondents, a completion rate of 57.9%. Thus, based on the GfK's recruitment and profile rates for the panel sampling frame, the cumulative response rate was 5.2% (Callegaro and DiSogra 2008; DiSogra and Callegaro 2009). The BAM sampling strategy was designed to oversample Black and Hispanic participants during initial data collection to strengthen representation of racial and ethnic minorities within the survey data; this is more relevant to other projects within AMP than my own, such as projects which focus specifically on Black Americans' attitudes. Therefore, my findings in Part I are based on calculations which incorporate weights derived from Census-benchmarks when analyzing the data; findings therefore reflect the actual population of the USA and are meant to be generalizable to the general population. In addition to standard demographic information, GfK included the Federal Information Processing (FIPS) code for each respondent, codes that identify the county in which each respondent lives. After data collection, members of the research team used these codes to match each respondent to measures of their county-level racial, ethnic, religious, political, and socioeconomic context from the American Community Survey (ACS). I include some of these measures in my exploration of diversity attitudes and diversity discourse in the USA. In my findings, I primarily begin with straightforward, non-complicated methods for presenting survey data, based on a combination of descriptive statistics, crosstabs, and simple association measures between several key items about diversity, demographics, racial attitudes, and other survey information. The survey-

analysis chapter also draws on exploratory factor analysis and a combination of linear and logistic regressions, a few of which have interaction effects.

Textual Analysis Chapter

The final substantive chapter analyzes a dataset of texts that I personally identified, scraped, and cleaned, with some technical assistance from LATIS, a support office in my institution that provides technological know-how for research and teaching purposes. The content analysis in a textual analysis, meaning I do not analyze multimodal data or visuals, images, videos, etc. That said, my analysis may not be as familiar to the average reader in a sociology department as the genealogy and survey analysis. In order to address different research goals and best leverage the strengths and limitations of various techniques in computer-aided-textual analysis (CATA), the analysis itself has a multifaceted research design that draws on several tools in the world of textual analysis. Sociologically speaking, we sociologists are not all familiar with the epistemological and ontological orientations of the methodologies I describe here. I appreciate that the dissertation provides an opportunity to practice writing about CATA and quantitative content analysis (QCA) from an instructional perspective, which is a direction I think will be important for my career. Therefore, I provide a detailed explanation of the roots, orientations, and technical aspects of the textual analysis methodology below; this discussion includes some work by sociologists, but primarily draws from fields which have pioneered, popularized, and perfected these methods. This includes communications, media studies, and journalism studies, but also advancements in fields such as computational science and computational linguistics (Blei 2012; DiMaggio, Nag, and Blei 2013; Jacobi, Atteveldt, and Welbers 2016; Ignatow and Mihalcea 2016;

Lindstedt 2019). I personally feel that the field sociology could make better use of these tools, and so the writing below is geared towards being informative for readers not familiar with CATA and QCA.

I can imagine that many sociologists and critical race theorists will be wary of QCA in comparison to more traditional methods in our field for undertaking textual or content analysis. In conversations with graduate students and other peers, a common misgiving I often encounter is that quantitative content analysis misses important meanings and normative characteristics of texts. This is a fair point, one which several authors who write about these methods themselves acknowledge (Baker et al 2008; Evans and Aceves 2016; Ignatow and Mihalcea 2016; Neuendorf 2017). But, we should not write QCA off wholly, especially not with a critique that is mostly rooted in pointing out the flaws of quantification. As opposed to some quantitative methods in specialized fields such as econometrics and epidemiology, QCA is not a process which just comes down to the numbers. In many ways, the goal of QCA is to actually highlight and measure data that could be characterized as "qualitative" in the social world. To illustrate this line of thinking, I cite a passage from Klaus Krippendorff, a well-known expert on quantitative content analysis; his book, *Content Analysis*, has been published in several editions and is a pivotal citation for social scientists and humanities scholars around the world. The following excerpt is from Krippendorff's own discussion of the same critiques and misgivings about QCA that I've encountered. As he describes, the "quantitative" in QCA is an overblown distinction. At its core, QCA is still a research method that is attentive to qualitative meanings, processes, and sociological forces, regardless of how critics feel about computer-aided tools:

> "I question the validity and usefulness of the distinction between quantitative and qualitative content analyses. Ultimately, all reading of texts is qualitative, even when certain characteristics of a text are later converted into numbers. The fact that computers process great volumes of text in a very short time and represent these volumes in ways someone can understand does not remove the qualitative nature of the texts being analyzed and the algorithms used to process them." (Krippendorff 2018; p. 21)

Another important reason why sociologists should not eschew content analysis is because content analysis, both qualitative and quantitative, has an important advantage over other methods that are more common in our field, such as survey analysis and interviews. As opposed to several other research approaches, content analysis offers a way to study social phenomenon in their *natural state.* All the texts that this dissertation analyzes were created by certain news media organizations on their own vocation and without any interference from the researcher. This is quite different to how data is collected in a survey or an interview; such methods must contend with issues of social desirability bias and reflexivity. The data that comes in a survey or an interview is necessarily imperfect; to some degree, it does not exactly reflect what goes on in the "real world" and such data is necessarily reflective of the data collection process, as it is mostly constituted by the research instrument and the research process. By contrast, content analyses studies social data which exists naturally in the social world; someone created it on their own volition. The researcher does not have to extract it from reluctant participants, and the data exist identically before and after data collection. From a methodological standpoint, sociology's interest on social forces, processes, and phenomena should prioritize data such as media content which exists naturally in the social world.

The above-described advantage applies to both QCA and qualitative approaches to content analysis, but we will need QCA now and in the future. It is undeniable that, two decades into the 21st century, the sheer amount of media material and content in our social world is exponentially larger than any other time period of history. And, barring a *major* shift in our social organization and the existence of the Internet, the amount of content is only going to grow. Does media content matter? To a degree, yes, although how much remains unclear, and is the subject of much scholarly inquiry. My project doesn't engage much with theories about media effects, such as the "hypodermic needle" model or uses-and-gratifications framework. That said, as described by Lindner and Barnard (2020) in their book *All Media are Social*, pretty much any form content analysis research is of scholarly or general interest because we assume that, to some degree, media content impacts people, groups, and society at large. The current project, therefore, seeks to understand the ins-and-outs of a certain media dataset rather than getting lost in speculating whether and how that media has impacts. I do hope, however, that future research—including my own work—can do more to dig into how different textual deployments of "diversity" have impacts on individuals and society. With my discussion of QCA's nature and advantages in mind, I am excited to present a mixed-methods textual analysis that uses both quantitative and qualitative methods to study diversity in political news media texts. I provide more detail about the technicalities of my research design in the chapter itself; in the remainder of this sub-section section, I provide a brief overview of the chapter's methods and process.

My content analysis is designed to explore diversity discourses with an eye to how such discourses relate to partisanship, political ideology, and "the culture wars,"

thereby illustrating how various diversity discourses are implicated in the ongoing clash between racial projects. I seek to provide the widest-possible cultural snapshot of diversity discourse in the USA with attention to political ideology as an important dimension between such diverse. Therefore, I provide an original sample and analysis of articles published online from six major news websites: Brietbart.com, Fox News, Wall Street Journal, CNN, New York Times, and HuffingtonPost. These publications are well-known and represent a wide range of the political spectrum, providing a cultural snapshot of diversity discourse from the far-Right to the far-Left. Over the course of my content analysis research process, I have kept detailed memos and extensive personal notes in a research log regarding data sampling and acquisition, clean-up and troubleshooting, and the multi-method analysis once the texts were sufficiently prepped. This seemed like a good idea based on common practice in any research process, ranging from qualitative ethnographic observation to highly technical analysis in a laboratory. Keeping a detailed record of the research process is of particular importance in social science work, wherein our own reflexivity as researchers is important to consider as relevant to the analytic process and interpretation of findings. This journal proved quite useful when writing about the research process in this chapter and the main textual analysis chapter.

In a purposive sampling strategy (with help from the department LATIS representative Michael Beckstrand), I have collected eighteen continuous months of articles published on these news sites from September 19th, 2017 to March 5th, 2019. Articles were sampled if they use the following words: “diversity,” “diverse,” “diversifying,” “diversification,” “multiculturalism,” and/or “multi-culturalism.” I identified the texts through a running search via an API code through the media-analysis-

tool NewsAPI.org, which is an aggregator of over 30,000 news sources across the world. This corpus is comprehensive and contains every article from these websites during the specified time window which meets selection criteria, barring a slight gap due to a technical glitch and change in the rules of NewsAPI (n >8,000). This sampling strategy is not random or generalizable, so my findings are not meant to make systemic conclusions about American news media as a whole in the same way that my survey analysis is generalizable to the American population. Rather, this purposive sampling strategy of the news media texts offers a snapshot of how these seven well-known, politically visible publications discuss "diversity" in their digital articles published over the last eighteen months.

My analysis is based on exploring major themes and nascent rearticulations of "diversity" in the texts. Much of the quantitative portion draws on topic models to compare and contrast different themes in the texts. This analysis essentially generates statistical findings regarding properties of *words* within texts (the unit of observation), and the interpretation is based on comparing results across *texts* from the six different *news sources* (the units of analysis). Then, the chapter also includes qualitative close-reading and some human-coding, which is a more common practice in sociology. In this second set of findings, I analyze sub-samples texts that draw on rearticulations such as "diversity of thought" and "diversity and inclusion" as described above and in my genealogical chapter.

Conclusion

To recap, the dissertation provides a multifaceted analysis of the past, present, and future of diversity discourse in the USA. I draw on theory from Omi and Winant (2015)

and Laclau and Mouffe (1985) to describe how the keyword "diversity" is intertwined with racial contestation. The first substantive chapter is a genealogical analysis about the past and present of diversity discourse, with some attention to directions in the near-future. Then, the survey analysis chapter explores everyday Americans' attitudes via nationally representative survey data; I describe major patterns and associations in such attitudes as related to racial, politics, and ideological contestation in the USA. Then, based on a large, original sample of texts from different news media organizations, the textual analysis chapter describes major themes and nascent rearticulations in American diversity discourse across the political spectrum. I believe that this mixed-methods project provides a very comprehensive and unique analysis of diversity discourse, and that the different methodological tools can demonstrate the utility of the theoretical framework described in the previous chapter. This project also is a first-step in forwarding a theory of "racialized keywords," a framework I am developing for how sociology and critical race theory studies competing discourses, articulations, and normative agendas that shape the meaning and implications of certain keywords in our society.

Without further ado, I now turn to my three substantive chapters.

A Genealogy of Diversity Discourse

Introduction

This chapter provides a genealogy of diversity discourse from the mid-20th century through the beginnings of the 2020's. I demonstrate how diversity discourse's past, present, and future are reflective of ongoing racial contestation, i.e. the ongoing battle between racial democracy and racial despotism within the trajectory of racial politics in the USA. Today, the meanings and functions of diversity as a racialized keyword means that diversity discourse can be deployed by various, competing racial projects within the overarching struggle of racial contestation. The keyword "diversity" is common the American lexicon, used in a variety of spaces and near-hegemonic in its cultural scope; it is an important part of our contemporary episteme and social landscape. This is a product of historical and contemporary racial contestation, political ideology, and the ever-present-yet-morphing "culture wars" in the USA. Thus, though the keyword "diversity" itself can often refer to many forms of personal and group differences, contemporary understandings and rearticulations of "diversity" are poised to play an important role in racial contestation, and the broader "culture wars" which have implications for all intersectional identities and marginalized statuses. In this chapter, I also illustrate the uses and utility of my theory of racialized keywords for studying processes of rearticulation, meaning making, and constructing discourse. I highlight how my theory applies not only to the history of "diversity" and diversity discourse, but to the very social processes and cultural-material arrangements that structure our society. Not counting the introduction and conclusion, the chapter is split into two main parts, albeit the second is much longer than the first.

The first section briefly revisits the theoretical-vocabulary of this project, which combines Omi and Winant's racial formation theory (2015) with Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory (1985). In this section, I also elaborate further on the "three periods" that I use to historicize racial contestation and the development of "diversity" from the mid 20th-century through today. First, there is the "Civil Rights Movement & Southern Strategy" from the 1950's to the 1970's. Then, there is "The Neoliberal Turn" from the 1980's to the early 2000's. Finally, there is what I dub "Racial NeoPopulism," from the early Obama years to the 2020's. In each of these three periods of history, racial contestation and political ideology has acted as a generative social force, not just for the meanings of the keyword "diversity" but the very cultural, political, and material organization our social world today.

Then, the second section of chapter has three remaining sub-sections that detail the history of "diversity" in the context of my three periods. My historical account is primarily based on discussing major cultural and institutional moments in post-Civil Rights history that have shaped the development of diversity discourse in the USA. Of particular importance are legislation, Supreme Court cases, and other actions by state institutions which have been pivotal to the workings of the racial state. From my discussion of diversity's early rise to my account of contemporary mainstream diversity discourse and a future of diversity rearticulations, I point to statements by elite political and cultural figures, materials from famous organizations, and major news stories relevant to the meanings, discourses, and ideological implications of the keyword

"diversity." Within this part of the chapter, I also describe nexuses of scholarly literature that study diversity discourse directly and/or the concept of "diversity" itself in the USA; in other projects about diversity discourse, this would probably comprise a "literature review" of sorts. Informed by critical race theory, sociological literature has spent a productive two decades highlighting and critiquing the shortcomings of diversity discourse as a tool for pursing of racial equality; much of this literature has focused on institutional policies within colleges and businesses, with a more recent turn to how mainstream diversity discourse features in community settings such as churches, neighborhoods, and K-12 schools. Such work generally agrees that mainstream diversity discourse falls short of bolstering anti-racism. But, as is a theme in my project, sociology must look to directions beyond solely critiquing lukewarm, not-radical-enough mainstream diversity discourse.

One area in need of further attention is the relationship between diversity discourse and social change in the USA. America is experiencing increasing ethnoracial difference and the shift towards the so-called majority-minority nation, i.e., increasing "diversity" (Frey 2018). Growing ethnoracial change at the national level and ethnoracial difference at the community level will have important implications for social cohesion, political mobilization, and race relations in the future, especially given the political salience of these topics; the Trump presidency is but a small piece of evidence that white supremacy and racial hierarchy are not going to peacefully disappear in the face of increasing racial difference. America is becoming more racially diverse, but racial hierarchy shows no signs of fading away despite these shifts. How does, and will, "diversity" discourse factor into this picture? And, note that while ethnoracial change at

national and local levels are rooted in generally similar international-level patterns, their potential intersections with diversity discourse are very much linked to a national versus a local context. Scholars will have to be attentive to grandiose beliefs or large-scale narratives about "the nation" versus lived experiences of contact, interaction, and social cohesion within "the community." The keyword diversity and surrounding diversity discourses could greatly differ in scope and consequence across conversations about a changing nation versus changing communities.

Another area which requires greater attention is how diversity can be "rearticulated" (Omi and Winant 2015) in ways which are downright dangerous. Phrases such as "diversity of thought," "viewpoint diversity," and "diversity of opinion" seem innocuous on the surface, and this author doesn't necessarily take issue with the general, abstract idea that such phrases signify. However, peeling back their charming veneer reveals that such rearticulations of diversity are actively being used in racist, sexist, homophobic, and other marginalizing ways. In the historical period described by this chapter, the articulation and rearticulation of concepts such as "colorblindness" "affirmative action," "welfare," and "crime," by the American political Right have fostered racial resentment, colorblind racial ideology, and racial inequality at large. Today, contemporary rearticulations of "diversity" are starring in the next chapter of this story, twisting language so as to protect racial despotism and maintain racial hierarchy. In another vein, critical scholars should be attentive to recent developments in diversity discourse within more Left-leaning social sectors, such as the academy itself. Perhaps motivated by scholarly critiques of the shortcomings of mainstream diversity discourse, the keyword "diversity" is more often accompanied by other keywords such as

"inclusion" and "equity" in certain spaces. This is a nascent trend, but one that must be fostered and bolstered so as to ensure that diversity discourse works in anti-racist, pro-equity ways.

I now turn to describing "three periods of racial formation," the historical and contemporary contextual backdrop in which the story of diversity discourse occurs. Each of the three periods represents a unique chapter in the trajectory of racial politics in the USA, wherein different meanings, discourses, and epistemes ebbed and flowed, but all three are interwoven in a continuous thread of racial contestation, political-ideological alignments, and the culture wars.

Three Periods of Racial Formation

The 2015 edition of *Racial Formation in the USA* describes history of race in the USA up to the early Obama years. My own historical discussion in this chapter is informed by a focus on this general timeline America's history, albeit with more attention the bulk of Obama's presidency and the Trump era. Inspired by the Foucaultian genealogical approach, I describe how changing epistemes and cultural meanings in three periods of racial formation shaped the development of diversity discourse in the USA. My theory of "racialized keywords," as described above, is a synthesis of Omi and Winant's theory of racial formation and Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory, with a stylistic nod to Raymond William's (1976) "keywords." This theory is based on a critical analysis of how racial contestation (the struggle between differing racial projects) is not only relevant to issues of racial inequality and racial identity; the social construction

called “race” has shaped and effectively constructed our entire social world. This perspective is reflective of the theory and literature cited in the previous chapter.

To recap, the theory of *racial formation* focuses on how racial difference, inequality and meanings shape our society, with on how “race” is created, sustained, and lived both historically and today. This theory takes a sociological perspective, highlighting the *social construction of race* (how racial categories gain meaning) and *racialization* (the process where persons, groups, and material/cultural aspects of life gain racial meanings) as shaped by social struggle in the context of our society, one wherein civic organization, citizenship, and social existence has been shaped by *the racial state*. The salience of the racial state, and race in society generally can be seen in how the “culture wars” and our political landscape have been indelibly shaped by historical and contemporary racial contestation; As Omi and Winant describe, and as this genealogy chapter further illustrates, the wheels of American history have often been driven by *racial projects*, competing agendas based on cultural and ideological mobilization that pursue differing ends. Some are in pursuit of “*racial democracy*,” while other seek to insulate “*racial despotism*,” a key driving force in the USA’s history. The *trajectory of racial politics* represents the historical development of race relations and racial hierarchy in the USA as a product of competing racial projects and a historical cycle of resistance, oppression and equilibrium in which the pursuit of racial democracy has been partially successful but periodically stalled by moments of retrenchment and a defensive, resilient racial despotism. In this project I use the term “*racial contestation”* as shorthand for this ongoing current of social life. This project seeks to expand on Omi and Winant’s concept of *rearticulations*, the process whereby concepts, terms, discourses, and ideas associated

with race can be articulated, and rearticulated, in ways that deploy the same concept in contrasting ways across various racial projects.

In order to develop *rearticulation*¸ I draw on Lalcau and Mouffe's poststructuralist discourse theory, using their vocabulary to explicate the process of rearticulation as a sociological theory and suggest analytic perspectives that can better operationalize and measure rearticulation from an empirical perspective. To recap, Laclau and Mouffe see society as primarily constructed by a series of *articulations*, wherein certain *signs* are imbued with different meanings, and *antagonisms*, the social processes through which social struggle and ideological contestation occurs. Signs transition through along a spectrum, going from *elements* to *moments* as they become more relevant and important to different *discourses* competing for hegemony within a particular topic domain's *order of discursivity*. Instances of articulation and rearticulation of certain signs within discourses creates *closure*, wherein some meanings associated with certain signs become taken for granted and common sense, which can elevate such signs to the status of *nodal point* and *floating signifier*; I use the term *keyword* to collectively refer to important signs. When a particular articulation is made, that articulation attaches meaning to a certain *keyword* in ways that construct meaning about other signs relevant to the topic domain, leading to *signifying chains* (consider how a conservative and liberal definition of "democracy" would create dissimilar signifying chains about a series of similar signs such as "voting," "rights," and "justice"). Eventually, some discourses and their important signs become so culturally embedded and hegemonic that they can be considered a *sedimented discourse*, albeit no such discourse or its associated signifying

chains are ironclad; Laclau and Mouffe's theory considers how hegemonic discourses and signs can be rearticulated and eventually replaced by other versions.

Thus, using the vocabulary and theoretical perspective described above, my genealogy chapter illustrates how the tale of diversity discourse has been greatly shaped by three major periods of history from the mid-20th century through today. Across these three periods, "diversity" discourse took particular shape and character based on the surrounding context wherein racial paradigms, meanings, and discourses become interwoven with political ideology and cultural beliefs. Most of the theories and authors who inform my project would agree that racial contestation in these three periods was not only constitutive of racial inequality and racial difference, but virtually all of social life in the USA, particularly political and ideological cleavages that define our contemporary culture wars and material arrangements in society. With this in mind, I now turn to the three periods, which are (a) "The Civil Rights Movement and Southern Strategy," (b) "Neoliberal Turn," and (c) "Racial NeoPopulism."

Period One: The Civil Rights Movement and Southern Strategy

For most of the USA's history, society has been defined by racial despotism. But, as Omi and Winant write, "Two important changes characterize postwar [post-WWII] racial politics: *paradigm shift* and *new social movements*" (161). The shifts in this cultural moment grew into the early Civil Rights movement. Omi and Winant describe the 1950's and 1960's as a major moment of transformation and a push for racial democracy. As they describe, the Civil Rights movement represented a major shift in "the

politicization of the social" and the USA's racial paradigm. Following the mobilization and social movements that spurred the Civil Rights movement, resulting legislation such as the 1964 Civil Rights Act represented a major concentrated push for racial democracy in the USA. The movement was primarily driven by black organization in its early years but include a process of coalition building and organizing by other groups in its latter years. The mobilization, radical frameworks, and coalition-building of the Civil Rights movement not only challenged racial segregation and classical racial bigotry, but extended towards marginalization along other dimensions such as gender and sexuality. Skrentny has put forward the of the "minority rights revolution" (Skrentny 2006) to describe a burst of legislation and policy shifts in the wake of the Civil Rights movement; in addition to the Civil Rights Act, the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act (1965) and Title IX (1972) represented other important legal and policy changes that extended equal rights and civic citizenship to marginalized members. The Federal government created the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) in 1964 to curb discrimination in employment and hiring as related to many forms of marginalization, not just race.

Importantly, public attention and cultural perceptions regarding such legislation, ranging from the Federal to the local, was an important part in the accompanying backlash towards America's racial reorganization and the success of what historians and social scientists have since dubbed "the Southern Strategy" (Haney Lopez 2014). The latter half of the first period in my framework was marked by early mobilization of backlash and resentment towards the social changes driven by the Civil Rights movement, which culminated into partisan realignment and political reorganization in the

USA. This series of events had a domino effect that spawned today's mainstream diversity discourse through an interplay of politics, partisanship, and policy.

In the years following the Civil Rights movement, changes in cultural legitimacy, and related policy and legislation did not necessarily erase bigotry and classical racism; rather, such attitudes shifted and morphed into newer forms, and then went onto lead to a reorganized political and ideological spectrum in the USA. Authors in sociology, social psychology, political science, and psychology have studied shifts in whites' racial attitudes following the Civil Rights movement, and most concur that "old fashioned racism"—prejudicial sentiments about minorities rooted in biological racism—has declined drastically. Research does show, however, that whites' attitudes about race and towards racial others shifted towards implicit, symbolic, and culture-centric narratives about the shortcomings of minority groups, often rooted in supposed-belief in the lack of racial discrimination or racial inequality in America today. Several authors from different theoretical perspectives have put forward measures of whites' racial attitudes and attitudes towards specific minority based on imagined cultural characteristics, economic behavior, and social standing. Several measurement scales created in this time period are still in widespread use today for measuring such racial attitudes, and other theories have emerged to discuss how negative racial attitudes and problematic racial beliefs linger in a country where explicit racism is (mostly) frowned upon; these include "modern racism" (McConohay 1986), "racial resentment" (Kinder and Sanders 1990), and "symbolic racism" (Sears and Henry 2003). For example, one question in Kinder and Sander's racial-resentment-scale reads, "Irish and Italian immigrants made it in America; blacks should be able to do the same" (Kinder and Sanders 1996). Though these theories are not

identical, this project is not focused on unpacking their differences. Rather, the story of diversity discourse in the USA is best served by a collective understanding of shifts in racial attitudes in post-Civil Rights America, especially as these "new" racial attitudes have persisted well into the 21st century and sparked the series of events which has led to mainstream diversity discourse today.

These new racisms were bolstered by anti-affirmative-action frames, which are relevant to the general trajectory of racial politics in the USA and have a particular importance for the history which led to the growth of contemporary mainstream discourse. To be clear, general beliefs about "affirmative action" in everyday America are often misinformed and devoid of attention to the actual histories of race-based equity policy and discrimination; there is no one law, ruling, or policy which explicitly created a system of "affirmative action" in the USA. In the final years of the Civil Rights movement, a combination of Presidential executive orders and related legislation encouraged federal contractors to take "affirmative action" to decrease workforce homogeneity and avoid racial discrimination (duRivage 1985; Harper & Reskin 2005; Collins 2011). Among these was Nixon's 1967 Philadelphia Plan, which was pivotal in solidifying understandings of "affirmative action" as tied to employments, equality, and race (Skrentny 1996). Created in 1965, The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission EEOC office developed processes of ensuring compliance with federal anti-discrimination law. Academics have discussed how the practices and powers of the EEOOC are often over-exaggerated, but the specter of anti-discrimination regulation nonetheless became an important dimension to how professional organizations managed hiring and admissions.

The "Southern Strategy," often attributed to Barry Goldwater and Richard Nixon's campaigns, represents a concerted effort by Republican politicians and conservative organizations to curry favor with white southern voters. This strategy hinged on mobilizing racial resentment regarding the end of Jim Crow and segregation in the South, much of which was based on backlash and new discourses related to welfare, crime, and affirmative action (Katzneslson 2005; Haney-Lopez 2014). The Southern Strategy was successful in breaking apart the New Deal coalition that once defined the Democratic Party. As black voters in the South gravitated towards the Democrats, whites in the South and across the nation began to shift towards a new Republican party, one which placed more emphasis on individualism, a small state, and anti-social-assistance frameworks. This new Republican Party made bogeymen out of equity policy designed to redress anti-black discrimination in the USA, particularly within education; demonizing open-enrollment in schools, bussing students across different neighborhoods, and the concept of "affirmative action" was a key strategy to building a new conservative bloc of white voters. Welfare was also demonized during this time period, and this was the beginning of new "racial codes" and representations (Gilens 1999; Mendelberg 2001) that equated public assistance and criminality with blackness; this built the narrative that Blacks had it too easy in society at the expense of whites. The Reagan election in 1980 signaled the success and fruition of the Southern Strategy, which in turn led to a drastically different social state and cultural understanding of the role of public assistance and individualism in society.

Thus, despite the gains of the Civil Rights movement, negative racial attitudes and a salient racial animus persisted in subtle ways have persisted in post-Civil Rights

America. Among others, “affirmative action” was often a bogeyman to justify the argument that blacks, women, and other marginalized persons were receiving too much help from the state and organizations at the expense of whites and men. This galvanized the early years of the “Southern Strategy,” wherein Republican politicians curried favor with white Southerners, flipping the traditionally-democratic South into the GOP stronghold we know it as today. The partisan realignment and political organization of the latter years of this first period not only shaped the history of diversity discourse, but the very cultural and material arrangements that define society today. The following period, “The Neoliberal Turn,” was therefore witness to continued political and ideological rearticulations economic and civic principles which had earlier defined both parties and America’s political spectrum as a whole. As Haney Lopez (2014) writes, the political realignment and resulting policy changes of these two periods have fundamentally shaped our society in troubling ways; the sub-title of his book, *Dog Whistle Politics*, states that coded racial appeals have “wrecked the middle class” in the USA.

Period Two: The Neoliberal Turn

The second period, “The Neoliberal Turn,” describes the ideological and cultural shifts that followed the Southern Strategy, in which time mainstream diversity discourse developed the most. By the early 1980’s and the beginnings of the Reagan era, the strategic mobilization of white resentment was in full swing, and its impact are visible in the historical creation of our understanding of the state, political landscapes, and race relations today. The political and partisan realignment sparked by the Civil Rights

movement and cultivated by the Southern Strategy took more shape during the Neoliberal Turn, leading to a Republican party with reinvigorated public support for pursuing a neoliberal agenda (Harvey 2007; Haney Lopez 2014; Gilens 1999; Centeno and Cohen 2012). Neoliberalism, as a policy style and a cultural framework, was built on classical liberalism's emphasis on individualism, which went hand-in-hand with Republican assertions that minorities, women, and other marginalized groups were actually getting too much help from the State and society as a whole, although this was truly a distortion of facts. Nevertheless, the neoliberal turn firmly set in to American culture and policies during the 1980's and the 1990's. Politicians catered to neoliberal understandings of our social world, and while this primarily began with Republicans, mainstream Democrats such as Bill Clinton also took up the neoliberal mantle. Today, our society's racial inequality, gender inequality, wealth concentration, and class organization have been greatly shaped by neoliberalism (Shapiro 2017; Soss, Fording and Schram 2011; Barany 2016). In addition to institutional and material inequalities, the neoliberal turn has greatly shaped contemporary American culture, particularly subscription to narratives of meritocracy, individual hard work, and the possibility of upward-mobility.

A pivotal point to implementing the neoliberal turn was the politicization of attitudes towards social assistance and rearticulating the role of state economic intervention. American understandings of poverty and the impoverished shifted towards a series of resentful narratives, racial stereotypes, and "culture of poverty" frameworks. Such arguments cast members of low-income, non-white communities as culturally deviant, morally lacking, and prone to criminality (Soss, Fording, and Schram 2011). Such narratives have had important consequences on Americans' attitudes about welfare

and welfare recipients, driving a consensus that social spending programs create dependency and reward non-neoliberal behavior (Barany 2016). Much of this was based on stereotypes and racial codes about blacks as welfare-dependent, culturally deviant, and prone to criminality (Mendelberg 2001; Gilens 1999; Soss and Schram 2007; Wilson and Nielson 2011). Research about racial attitudes cited above has often discussed how white opposition to welfare can often be linked to racial resentment and beliefs in blacks' cultural dependency on social assistance and/or a lack of proper work ethic or decision-making (Bobo 1999; Sears and Henry 2003; Brandt and Reyna 2012). Social assistance became more punitive, controlling, and inaccessible during this time period; recipients' behavior and personal virtues came under more scrutiny as a condition to receive assistance, a process Soss and co-authors refer to as "neoliberal paternalism" today (Soss and Schram 2007; Soss, Fording, and Schram 2011).

The gains of the Civil Rights era became bogeyman and straw-man for arguing to frames of "reverse discrimination," key to mobilizing white resentments towards blacks during the neoliberal turn. Consider how "the Reagan administration also used—indeed, created—affirmative action as a wedge issue" (Haney-Lopez 2014: 69). While court cases and litigation challenging such policy had existed prior, it was around the 1980 (the years of the Reagan campaign and administration) when Republicans consistently began vocalizing targeted opposition to racialized policy and anti-discrimination regulation in ways that popularized the phrase "affirmative action" itself in the American lexicon (duRivage 1985; Skrentny 1996; Crosby et al 2006; Lipson 2008). Numerous conservative think tanks and researchers spread anti-affirmative-action ideas and messages to delegitimize race-based policy in admissions and hiring. The conservative

political coalition mobilized anti-affirmative-action sentiment during the Neoliberal Turn as part of their general strategy of upholding abstract liberalism, individualist ideas, and coded racial resentments. As described earlier, "affirmative action" itself does not speak to any one specific policy, but a diffuse series of mostly-voluntary policies in various companies and college. My theory of racialized keywords can consider how the usage of the "affirmative action" by the detractors of racialized policy created a new series of signifying chains, antagonisms and articulations that turned this term into a go-to catchphrase that people today still invoke when arguing that racial inequality doesn't exist or that minorities are overcompensated in society today.

Narratives about black criminality and deviance were also instrumental to the Neoliberal Turn. The deployment of individualist frameworks and culture-of-poverty arguments led to an increase the State's punitive power and legitimacy of punishment; this has been an important force in shaping the criminal justice system today, which is rife with racial inequalities at every conceivable level (Rios 2011; Reskin 2012; Beckett and Evans 2015; Van Cleve 2016; Garland; Soss and Weaver 2017). Some authors, such as Tali Mendelberg in *The Race Card* (2001), have described how partisan politics, electoral processes, and voters' beliefs during the 1980's and 1990's added a partisan and racial understanding to crime, deviance, and justice. Her analysis of the 1988 presidential race between George Bush and Michael Dukakis describes how the former's campaign capitalized on existent racism in the electorate via the infamous "Willie Horton" ad, which depicted a menacing image of the black convict and attacked Dukakis on criminal justice. The construction of Blackness as amoral happened through racial codes (Gilens 1999) and symbolic resentments, marking the totality of the shift from classical racism in

the USA to more covert forms of racial prejudice. The "War on Drugs" was sparked during this time period (Alexander 2011), and the representation of Blacks as drug dealers and users worked as another coded stereotype (Gray 2013) that legitimized a punitive turn in policing and incarceration, leading to a new chapter in a long American history of racism in the justice system. In addition to a harsher system of incarceration and racial inequalities in sentencing, the Neoliberal Turn paved the way for the police brutality and militarization which has defined state responses to protest in the recent years; as I've been writing this dissertation, the National Guard has terrorized my city several times in the past year following protests for racial equality.

Thus, based on concerted political mobilization and partisan strategies, the Neoliberal Turn legitimized cultural beliefs and sparked that ultimately shrank social assistance and created more punitive State practices based on logics of individualism and meritocracy. The neoliberal turn dominated the American social and political landscape from the 1980's into the early 2000's. This time period solidified what we take for granted today about the Republican Party, and American politics as a whole, using the logic of individual merit as a governing framework. Of course, the Neoliberal Turn was successful because individualistic frameworks went in hand with neoliberal approaches to governance, a process which worked by cultivating support for a smaller social state and decreased social spending through coded appeals to the white racial resentment which drove the early days of the Southern Strategy. Elites built support for conservative belief and the contemporary Republican party by mobilizing racial resentment and white's negative attitudes about minorities—particularly blacks—so as to argue against the "nanny state," thus justifying the rollback of social services with meritocratic,

individualistic ideals via racial codes (Gilens 1999) and dog-whistles (Haney-Lopez 2014) which subtly but strongly spoke to white racial animus, particularly protecting whites' material, cultural, and political resources and power.

During this time period, colorblind racism grew into a prevailing racial ideology as individualism and meritocratic frames became crucial to culture, policy, and governance. Critical race theorists agree that while the neoliberal turn was defined by active attempts to maintain racial despotism in the USA, this era was defined by general public and cultural commitment to colorblind ideology; race was *not* to be brought into the conversation, whatever the conversation may be about. Scholars in critical legal studies, as well as sociology and psychology, have used frameworks of "colorblind racism" to describe the discursive landscape following the Civil Rights movement. This begins, by valorizing individualism and claiming to not "see" race, a process which can actually enable, conceal, and normalize racial inequities. Overzealous, targeted applications of these ideas can thus reify systematic racial inequality. Colorblind racism and post-racial ideology have been interrogated for decades for how such thinking works to falsely propagate the idea that racial inequality no longer exists and to acknowledge race whatsoever in the USA is akin to blasphemy; such thinking has been instrumental to the continued perpetuation of racial inequality and racial hierarchy (Carr 1997; Bonilla-Silva 2003; Gallagher 2003). One of the most well-known researchers of color-blind racism is sociologist Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, whose book *Racism Without Racists* (2003) was very influential in popularizing this framework in sociology and several other fields; other authors who deserve mention in this area include sociologists Leslie Carr and

Charles Gallagher, as well as psychologist Helen Neville. Colorblindness today is still a primary focal point and theoretical framework for much of sociological literature and critical race theory (Bonilla-Silva 2003; Omi and Winant 2015; Delgado and Stefancic 2017)

Omi and Winant describe how the rise of colorblindness represented a successful *rearticulation* by agents of racial despotism as part of a process of incorporation and containment. The concept of being "colorblind" was an important frame in the Civil Rights movement meant to combat classical bigotry and racial antagonisms between individuals of different background. But the rearticulation of this idea greatly twisted this logic, using its base message in ways that shifted it far from being an anti-racist discourse. Such rearticulation thusly led to the creation of an important cornerstone in the perpetuation of racial inequality and the defense of racial despotism. Colorblindness" was a frame originally forwarded in the Civil Rights movement as an anti-discriminatory, pro-justice discourse; colorblindness spoke to not judging individuals based on racial background, an important aspect of the Civil Rights movement during an era of widespread, open bigotry. During the neoliberal turn, however, political and cultural elites began to rearticulate colorblindness in efforts to challenge affirmative action and similarly delegitimize other race-conscious equity policies, such as open-school enrollments and student busing meant to combat racial segregation in education. Ultimately, the rearticulation of colorblindness was so successful that today, many sociologists follow Bonilla-Silva (2003) in conceptualizing colorblindness as a racial

ideology that ultimately maintains racial hierarchy through overzealous and malignant applications of the idea of being colorblind and not seeing race.

Thus, while color-blindness itself was used by activists during the end of the Jim Crow era to argue against overt prejudice and discrimination, such thinking today can serve to deny the existence of racism, racial inequality, and prejudice. Perpetuating the idea that America is "post-racial" is in itself an exercise in racial domination and hierarchy (Mustafa & Emirbayer 2009; Omi & Winant 2015). Thus, while post-racial or color-blind discourses come from a non-racist ideal, they reflect a systematic denial of the importance of race and racism in contemporary America. What is particularly salient about post-racial ideology is how it is often used by the state and within legal and/or judicial proceedings to curtail policy efforts to ameliorate racial inequality; post-racial ideology thusly maintains social systems of hierarchy, privilege, and moral superiority. Research has shown how legal discourses and elites' political statements draw on post-racial frames, but several authors highlight how everyday individuals subscribe to these ideas as well. From top to bottom, colorblind racism and post-racial ideology are an important aspect of social life today, albeit colorblind racism itself is fraught with contradictions and challenges, such as the co-existence of multicultural celebration and the rise of mainstream diversity discourses which highlight race rather than obscuring it. Thus, I agree with Omi and Winant's assertion that colorblind racial hegemony is "highly unstable" (Omi and Winant 2015: 132). Our current era in the trajectory of racial politics still operates under a colorblind racial hegemony, but one which is facing even more challenges and conceptual clashes. Notably, while colorblind legal and policy logics remain, the intentional ignoring of race seems to be on the way out, particularly among

the new political Right, which is reinvigorating whiteness and racial resentment in ways that very much draw attention to racial difference and racial identity.

Period Three: Racial NeoPopulism

In the 2010's to 2020, we are in the midst of what I would dub a "Racial NeoPopulism." Following 9/11, the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, the Obama election, the growth of the Tea Party, MAGA hats, and unabashed white populism today, we must conceive of the current time as a new era in the trajectory of racial politics. Of course, continuity exists; previous neoliberal tenets and colorblind norms have been challenged (notably, by both parties), but there is still (a) a clear partisan divide in how different political groups align with different racial projects, and (b) a generally salient racial animus on American politics. But, Racial Neopopulism exists in a more complex racial landscape; there have been new moments of racialization and racial backlash, particularly stepping beyond the traditional anti-Black messages which drove the neoliberal turn. Consider how 9/11 was a major moment for the racialization of "Muslim" and "Arab" identities as foreign and dangerous, coinciding with renewed anti-Hispanic sentiment as backlash towards immigration has become more central to Republican platforms. Thus, the bogeymen of the preceding era (black welfare queens and affirmative action) haven't necessarily disappeared, but new bogeymen have taken their place, particularly the idea of becoming a "majority-minority" nation. Thus, I call this era "Racial NeoPopulism" because the political Right today rallies its base around a form of white populism which has adapted the current times. Amidst its traditional emphasis on maintaining America's default racial order and undermining the push for racial democracy, today's conservative

politics also is based on mobilization of sentiments regarding twenty-first century social life.

Some pundits hailed the Obama election as evidence of a post-racial era, but research has since shown that Obama presidency and twenty-first century politics have been very racialized. Conservative and liberal Americans have distinct racial attitudes, beliefs about racial inequality, and opinions about race-based policy (Bobo and Charles 2009; Bobo et al 2012; Tesler 2016). The rise of the Tea Party, the alt-Right, and the MAGA president further illustrate the centrality of racial identity and racial resentment to contemporary partisan politics. It is within this ongoing and in-progress period where there are new directions for "diversity" discourse, directions that sociologists should consider for their distinction from mainstream diversity discourse or a dominant diversity ideology. The rearticulations I explore in the final section of this genealogy chapter are related to today's face of "the culture wars" and contemporary antagonisms and articulations which ascribe different, clashing meanings to important nodal points associated political discourses and ideological worldviews related to a variety of topic domains. In his updated 2019 version of *A War for the Soul of America: A History of the Culture Wars*, Andrew Hartman revisits an argument he made in earlier versions of the book: the "culture wars" are mostly over, with the liberal-progressive bloc gaining the upper-hand. As he describes in the updated edition, the rise of Trump and the contemporary face of the GOP shows that the culture wars are not necessarily over, and that politics in the coming years will be greatly defined by the evolution of cultural and ideological cleavages that have defined the culture wars of the past.

In the past few years, several sociologists have turned their attention to the transformed cultural cleavages and nativist sentiments that define this new era of racial neopopulism; several notable scholars of critical race theory have contributed to this dialogue. Gallagher (2014) describes how the average person in the UK and the US over-estimates the proportion of racial, ethnic, and other minorities in the USA, and such misunderstandings have important consequences for inequality, policy, and social responses to increasing difference; there are implications abound in the short-title of this publication, "Blacks, Gays, and Jews Are Taking Over." Arlie Hochschild *Strangers in their Own Land* (2016) describes conservative voters and communities feel alienated by a changing society and left behind by a society which they perceive as favoring "the interlopers" rather than "the rightful." Bobo (2017) describes how the Trump election certainly puts to bed the question of a post-racial society, and how the Trump campaign was openly built on appealing to the idea that rights, power, and privilege should be concentrated in the hands of white, Christian, males in the USA.

A common talking point after the 2016 election was that class anxieties were the primary impetus for Trump's win. But, academic inquiry into this area has generally shown that cultural factors, particularly racial attitudes, gender attitudes, and the protection of status, were the true impetus for the 2016 election. Indeed, the role of racial patriarchy in Trump's victory reflected the general shifts of the Republican party's base that was set into motion by the Southern Strategy and continued during the neoliberal turn. Drawing on experimental, survey, and polling data, several authors in political science, social psychology, sociology, and other fields have studied the question of the true motivators of support for the Trump campaign. Across a reading of several different

publications that use various forms of theory and data, a general trend is clear: attitudes related to demographic identity and cultural threat had more to do with Trump's success than economic anxiety or financial worry (e.g. Mutz 2018; Major, Blodorn, and Major Blascovich 2018; Knowles and Tropp 2018; Myers and Levy 2018; Sides, Tesler, and Vavreck 2018). Even outside the direct context of Trump and political partisanship, a general body of experimental and survey research has shown that the idea of a changing population and related cultural shifts can spark negative backlash among some Americans, particularly white males and political conservatives (e.g. Craig and Richeson 2014; Danbold and Huo 2015; Craig, Rucker, and Richeson 2018a, 2018b). I return to this trend later when describing new scholarly directions related to diversity discourse in the USA. In my view, sociological research has yet to truly illustrate whether and how diversity discourse shapes the ways Americans think about changing communities and a changing nation.

Bonilla-Silva (2019) makes several excellent points about the Trump election and the current political-racial landscape, helping to contextualize how the events of today reflect the intersections of racial contestation and political partisanship of the past. In his discussion of whether class anxieties are to blame for the resurgence of white populism and the Trump election, he is critical of authors such as Hochschild (2016) who draw on a framework akin to the "forgotten millions" narrative in the media following the election. Though I think Bonilla-Silva is hard on the authors he critiques in this section, I don't disagree with the point. On a personal level, I remember being irritated by the "forgotten millions" narrative, which states that white working-class communities in flyover states have been comparatively left behind economically and culturally.

Ultimately, any critical race theorist should recognize such narratives as a typical maneuver of white supremacy, erasing of the suffering of POC in the USA, and indicative of general white status norms and entitlement. As Bonilla-Silva writes, "current economic anxieties of the white working-class reflect that their income has grown slowly or regressed slightly compared with that of their elite white brethren, making them feel they are becoming black-like" (19). White working class families still fare significantly better than black or brown working-class families, both in terms of economics and status-prestige, but this is left out of the conversation. Rather, the forgotten millions framework speaks to the idea that white working-class voters are supposed to have it better than their POC peers and too easily forgives the role of racism, xenophobia, and patriarchy in motivating support for Trump.

This is not to say that the 2016 election can solely be pinned on the white-working class. Plenty of college-educated, middle-class whites also voted for Trump, and as Bonilla-Silva describes, collective systems of racial hierarchy and post-racial ideology have always involved whiteness as a whole, not just the working-class. He how also describes how simply pinning the Trump election on a bloc of far-Right racists and extremists is inattentive to how racism and the dominant racial order are collective phenomena. Note that Bonilla-Silva (2019) writes that "despite the rise in old-fashioned racism in Trump's America, the new racism and its ideology of color-blindness are still hegemonic" (14). I feel the term *hegemonic* is generous, but I agree with this general premise within my own understanding of racial neopopulism. Though classical bigotry, nativism, and xenophobia are resurging, they now function through a general veneer of colorblind norms and post-racial convention. Tucker Carlson, Richard Spencer, Ben

Shapiro, and other far-Right pundits still couch their racism and bigotry in post-racial rhetoric and coded language. Within the Right, while explicit bigotry, Nazi banners, and unabashedly racist rhetoric defines some groups, the vocalization of classical bigotry and biological racism remains a relatively fringe phenomenon, at least at the moment.

I agree with another assertion Bonilla-Silva makes in this article: we should not valorize a return to "politics as usual" after the Trump presidency. The political, ideological landscape in the USA prior to Trump's election was still one wherein America's foreign policy was imperialist and our domestic policy was defined by colorblind racial hegemony (Omi and Winant 2015) and other systems of inequality. Relatedly, we should not view the Trump election as a shock or an aberration; it is a natural product of the history of racial contestation, ideological cleavages, and partisan reorganization following the southern strategy and neoliberal turn. Turney et al (2018) track electoral behavior and partisan alignment among white working-class voters, presenting a historical look at voting behavior alongside indicators of economic statistics from the late 1960's to the 2016 election. They show that white working-class voters, who once were the key factor in the New Deal coalition of Democrat voters in the pre-Civil War era, have been shifting to the Republican party for decades; Trump's election should be considered as a culmination of trends set in motion after the Civil Rights movement.

Overall, though the era of Racial Neopopulism is distinct from the earlier two eras, it is still part of the same continuous thread in America's political history. The USA's political spectrum and contemporary partisan organization, a defining series of social processes that generate our social world, is a product of historical racial contestation and

related ideological reorganization. This author feels that social scientists must be more critical in our characterization of politics in the USA. Political ideology is not solely a reflection of beliefs about the polis, the democratic state, citizenship, and nation. Following the story of race and given the indelible racialized character of America's foundations, politics today is a product of racial history, racial hierarchy, and racial animus. In particular, political organization across a spectrum of Left to Right and partisan politics of Democrats versus Republicans is a result of racialization. Past research about affirmative action attitudes and similar topics has studied the idea that such beliefs may be motivated by "principled conservatism" rather than racial attitudes (Sniderman and Carmines 1997), but I contends that potential motivations and meanings associated with conservative thought have mostly fallen to the wayside; at best, classical conservatism functions as post-hoc justifications for racism, sexism, and homophobia in the culture wars. Overall, American "politics" is all about race, and that spells a tumultuous, dynamic future for diversity discourse; this is also relevant to the future of a variety of other discourses, policies, and ideas associated with other racialized keywords such as "immigration" and "crime." Thus, America's history of intersecting racial contestation and political ideology has evolved, but it hasn't disappeared.

"The River:" The Evolution of Diversity as Shaped by Three Periods of Racial Formation

The word "diversity" gained new meanings, significance, and functions in these three periods in post-Civil Rights America. But, as described above, these three periods did more than shape diversity discourse; this overall window in American history was

witness to the reorganization and discursive transformation of several other cultural concepts and policy logics related to race. Across the three periods, racial projects and related antagonisms have been wrapped up with political ideology and cultural cleavages. From a historical perspective, while George Wallace and Donald Trump are not identical, they both represent important points upon a continuous thread of interwoven political and racial ideologies in the USA. From an intersectional perspective, the historical periodization described here also led to the rise of the contemporary GOP as a party that effectively endorses and appeals to white male patriarchy. This partisan landscape has a fundamentally important relationship with "the culture wars" in the USA, the collective issues of which constitute our entire social life. Our social world, broadly speaking, is a product of the history described above. From a poststructuralist perspective, the evolution of "diversity" reflects a finite, partial part of a larger potential landscape. Consider the metaphor of irrigating a river, which I use here to represent an important concept from poststructuralism and Lalcau and Mouffe's discourse theory: all meanings and discourse in our society represent a finite, partial realization of an infinite possibility.

In this analogy, the flowing water in a river and the farmland around it can be considered the totality of forces that generate social life; identity, power, antagonisms, ideology, social events, cultural meanings, material arrangements, and any number of other dimensions of society. The water itself flows as unbound meaning loaded with potential energy, akin to Laclau and Mouffe's understanding of infinite potential meanings that could be associated with various signs in our social world. Powered by social forces such as political ideology and racial contestation, various articulations act as irrigation channels; different articulations divert the water into contrasting paths,

depending on the antagonisms and contestation at work. Consequently, the events of the three periods have dug a series of interconnected irrigation channels that divert the water to one particular area of the surrounding terrain, which therefore means the diverted river water cannot go elsewhere, rendering some areas wet while leaving others dry. Essentially, the keyword "diversity" was denied the possibility of just being some innocuous, unimportant lexical entity, perhaps never being more than some synonym for "variety," "difference," or "heterogeneity." Instead, "diversity" became a keyword that is interwoven with various meanings, knotted up in various discourses, and entangled with racial contestation in the USA. Once water has been irrigated, you can't just put it back. In fact, the implications "diversity" has for all forms of marginalization and inequality—such as gender, sex, ability, and class—are a direct product of the trajectory of racial politics in the USA. During each of the three periods, social change and racial contestation have created (and in the case of the third period, are still creating) the irrigation channels through which the story of the racialized keyword "diversity" flows.

Leaving this metaphor behind, the three sub-sections below describe the story of diversity in the USA, explaining how this term became a racialized keyword rife with many implications for our society. Each sub-section focuses on the events, contexts, and racial contestation of one of the three periods. Though this project focuses on diversity discourse, the discussion below suggests how my theory of racialized keywords can contribute to the study of a variety of histories, topics, and meanings that have to do with racial contestation and the construction of ideological discourses in the USA.

The Evolution of "Diversity" as a Racialized Keyword

There are three sub-sections below. The first, titled "The Civil Rights Movement and Southern Strategy: The Foundations of Diversity Discourse," describes the relative unimportance of "diversity" during the Civil Rights movement, but then describes how this time period was witness to racial contestation and political shifts that would lay the foundations for the rise of "diversity" as an important term in the USA; this section culminates with a discussion of the famous 1978 *Bakke* case. The second subsection, titled "The Neoliberal Turn: The Rise of Mainstream Diversity Discourse," describes how diversity become an important keyword during the neoliberal turn, ending with a discussion of the Supreme Court cases *Gratz* and *Grutter*. Finally, the third subsection, titled "Diversity in the 21st century," explores research about mainstream diversity discourse in the last two decades, ending with a discussion of how the challenges of today's era of Racial NeoPopulism points to new directions for "diversity" and studying diversity discourse.

The Civil Rights Movement and Southern Strategy: The Foundations of Diversity

The first of the three periods spans the Civil Rights movement, subsequent legislation and policy shifts, and the beginnings of the racial backlash and political reorganization known as "The Southern Strategy." During this time, "diversity" was not yet a major keyword in the American lexicon, but the wheels were set in motion that took diversity discourse to where it is today as a major cultural mainstay. This subsection of the diversity history closes with a discussion of the pivotal 1978 *Bakke* case, which represents a major moment of *articulation* and *closure* for diversity discourse in the

context of competing ideological *antagonism.* As described above, this period was defined by the cultural de-legitimization of explicit bigotry, classical racism, and pro-segregationist politics, albeit this was a slow and painstaking process which never truly reached fruition. Rather than disappearing, racism shifted into new forms; new forms of bigoted attitudes, symbolic prejudices, and coded discourses were first cultivated in this era, leading to early waves of racialized backlash and anti-affirmative-action agendas which reinvented the trajectory of racial politics. This set the stage for the rise of "diversity" as a racialized keyword in the context of political contestation and backlash towards race-based equity policy in colleges and businesses.

Prior to the Civil Rights movement, the term "diversity" was not an important keyword in the American lexicon, and it didn't catch on until the end of the 1970's. The word itself existed, certainly, but it wasn't imbued, laden, and packed with the complicated series of meanings, ideologies, and cultural beliefs that it is today. It wasn't necessarily a social signifier of difference and identity. In the years of the Civil Rights movement and onwards, the term "multiculturalism" served that role, acting as a go-to and widely recognized catchphrase that has to do with social differences related to race, ethnicity, nationality, religion and/or other conceptualizations of identity, origins, and group membership, particularly driven by social conversations and competing visions for an integrated, pluralist, multi-ethnic America. But, I use the term "multiethnic" intentionally here, as this conversation often revolved around white ethnicities. "Multiculturalism" did not generally indicate zealous endorsement of a multiracial, anti-racist America (Parillo 2009; Fox 2012; Bashi Trietler 2013). While some of the tenets of messages of multiculturalism existed in the early Civil Rights era, such arguments were

not foundational to the defining platform of justice, equality, and democratic ideals that defined the Civil Rights movement. An emphasis on rights and social justice, not the celebration of difference, was the defining argument of the Civil Rights movement. Omi and Winant (2015) describe how some early aspects of Civil Rights mobilization spoke to the celebration multiculturalism, but this minor trend gave way to more radical arguments centered on citizenship and equality.

The term multiculturalism still exists in the USA, and it is still a fairly common keyword in international contexts, but diversity language today has become the default language in the USA across institutional and cultural settings. In fact, I would argue—as would several scholars cited in this study—that the growth of diversity discourse and decline of language of multiculturalism reflects the rise of a hegemonic colorblind racism (Bonilla-Silva 2003; Omi and Winant 2015). Thus, as Berrey (2015) writes, "the term *diversity* became favored over *multiculturalism*…likely because diversity more evidently eschewed a social justice view" (37; italics in original). Multiculturalism draws attention to racial difference, but "diversity" is can be as vague and colorblind as you like. I return to this theme later; as my dissertation shows, the floating signifier *diversity* today does not seem to be as deeply interwoven with multiculturalism as we might expect. Multiculturalism really has fallen off.

Thus, for most of the first period I described above, the concept of "diversity" was not important in the American lexicon, and multiculturalism performed a role that we associate with diversity discourse today. Had it not been for the story of race-based equity policy and related backlash, this keyword may never have been as important as it is today. In my above discussion of this first historical period, I mentioned how the

Southern Strategy in the 1970's was a political realignment galvanized by the white public's backlash towards the (perceived) policy and material gains of the Civil Rights movement for minorities. These political events were particularly important for the story of diversity discourse because of another racialized keyword I hope to study in more depth in the future: "affirmative action," a lexical entity which was popularized by the political Right in the 1970's and 1980's has had major impacts on politics, policy, and (in)equality in the USA. So fundamental is "affirmative action" to racial contestation in the USA this phrase continue to operate as a fundamental cornerstone in racial attitudes, beliefs, and discourses even in the twenty-first century (Crosby et al 2006; Pierce 2013), relevant to racial resentment, colorblind racism , and more.

The term "affirmative action" is itself is not attached to one single policy or legislation; it is colloquially refers to a collection of programs, legislation, and procedures with similar goals across different spaces, mostly following the Civil Rights movement in the mid-1960's and into the 1970's. A combination of Presidential executive orders and related legislation encouraged federal contractors to take "affirmative action" to decrease workforce homogeneity and avoid discrimination during the Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon administrations (duRivage 1985; Harper & Reskin 2005; Collins 2011). Among these was Nixon's 1967 Philadelphia Plan, which was pivotal in solidifying understandings of the lexical phrase of "affirmative action" as tied to employments, equality, and race (Skrentny 1996). Created in 1965, The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission EEOC office developed processes of ensuring compliance with federal anti-discrimination law. While anti-discrimination law theoretically applied to all businesses and their hiring decisions, only the small minority of companies that had contracts with

the Federal government, paid for by public funds, were encouraged to increase their representation of minority racial groups, but it was far from a strong rule with great consequence (). Meanwhile, some colleges and universities voluntarily implemented admissions policies to increase the representation of minorities in their student bodies (Harper and Reskin 2005; Stulberg and Chen 2013). Northern universities began to implement race-conscious policies in admissions following protests in the South in the 1960's and a later wave of protests on college campuses in the 1970's (Stulberg & Chen 2013; Berrey 2011; Kelly & Dobbin 1998). The vast majority of such polices were voluntary and symbolic of the Academy as a generally Left-leaning, progressive sector of society; a large portion of such policies' existence involved virtue signaling and simply professing an institutional commitments to racial and gender equality.

Thus, early equity policies represented a relatively diffuse, weak, and sparse phenomenon that existed unevenly across different social spaces; it would be disingenuous to suggest that such policies became a defining aspect of our society during this time. Nevertheless, using that very argument as a guise, conservative think tanks and politicians began to demonize these policies. The lexical entity "affirmative action," based on language in earlier Executive orders regarding companies with federal contracts, was mostly constructed as a negative concept that worked as a coded to appeal to racial resentment among whites (Haney Lopez 2014). This led to general white backlash towards the bogeyman of "affirmative action," all part of an important politicized and coordinated agenda that began at the end of the minority rights revolution and grew to define the neoliberal turn (Katznelson 2005; Steeh and Krysan 1995; Crosby et al 2006; Pierce 2013) By the late 1970's, these policies had become a well-known talking point

that was controversial and politicized; critics claimed that such endeavors undermined individual merit and were racist towards whites, leading to litigation and public backlash against race-based equity policy (Perea 2013; Donnor 2014; Moore 2014). Opponents of "affirmative action," attacked such policy as reverse discrimination, favoring unqualified persons, and undermining American ideals such as equality and meritocracy (Bonilla-Silva, Lewis, and Embrick 2004; Harrison et al 2006).

Litigation and court cases have been key battlegrounds in the struggle between supporters and detractors of racialized policy, particularly race-based admissions procedures in higher education (Harper & Reskin 2005; Lipson 2008; Blume & Long 2014; Berrey 2015). Litigation based on whites' opposition to affirmative action programs in college admissions has made several appearances in the Supreme Court, further politicizing such equity policy along racial factors. Such cases have a long, continuous history, and conservative interest groups have frequently advanced such litigation from the 1970's onwards, one of the first of which was Supreme Court case *DeFunis v Odegaard* (1974). This brings me to my discussion of an important Supreme Court case, *Bakke* vs. *University of California Regents*. This 1978 ruling was a major moment in the story of American diversity discourse, a miniature big-bang for the ubiquitous term for the popularization of "diversity;" like the actual Big Bang and our universe, we still feel the ripples of *Bakke* today.

Alan Bakke, a white man, was twice rejected from UC-Davis medical school. He sued the school, claiming that his whiteness had counted against him due to the existence of a special admissions program for minority students; the case reached the Supreme Court in 1978 following several rulings and appeals in lower courts. The final ruling

represented a series of compromises of sorts, as it both upheld the existence of race-based admissions procedures but set limits on them and banned racial quota systems. During the case, Justice Lewis Powell ended up being an intermediary, a lone middle-ground taker standing between the other justices, four of whom on were in either camp; Thurgood Marshall was among those who saw affirmative action as constitutional, and the court's Chief Justice Warren Burger among those who led the anti-affirmative-action camp. For the duration of the case's proceedings and the backroom deliberations of the justices and their staff, Justice Powell's backroom contemplation and calculus leads to the selection of a very particular kind of diversity discourse in context of other discourses, ideals, racial projects. As Carr (2018) describes, Powell and his staff of clerks and aides considered various arguments in support and opposition of race-based equity policy, and Powell's decision-making reflected his desire to strike a balance between Civil Rights principles (and colorblind rearticulations) of not being attentive to race while also adhering to free-market, academic freedom arguments which stated that schools have the right to conduct admissions as they see fit. Similarly, Powell wanted to find a medium between endorsing race-centric equity policy in admission and striking down any such policy outright.

Amidst the deliberations of the case, Powell penned his now-famous written opinion stated that pursuing "diversity" in a student body is a "compelling state interest" and therefore permissible (Barnes, Chemerinsky, and Onwuachi-Willig 2015: 283). According to this argument, the government has a compelling interest in promoting "diversity" in certain spaces due to the benefits of a diverse environment. This was the product choosing a compromise between opposing poles of colorblind denial of racial

inequality at one end and progressive, so-called "radical" arguments about racial inequality on the other. I'd caution readers from making the mistake of thinking that Powell's attempt to defend affirmative action came from a burning desire to help achieve racial equality in the US. Powell himself was a conservative with a background in corporate law and a history of arguing for low state regulation of business practices (Carr 2018). From a political-ideological standpoint, much of Powell's calculus during this court case was motivated by his small government views and a desire to curb state regulation of colleges and corporations, not a fervent commitment to anti-racism and restorative justice.

Eventually, in the final ruling and general case, there was a 5-4 vote that the University's system of racial quotas in admissions was unconstitutional, and several of the justices wrote different written opinions about the case. Powell was known for his plurality vote, which banned quotas but did not necessarily wholly ban "affirmative action in its entirety." The language about diversity was not necessarily headline news following the *Bakke* ruling. Much of the public attention about the case fell on banning of racial quotas and thresholds within college admissions, and some focused on Thurgood Marshall's minority opinion which defended the concept of race-based equity policy and advocated for racial equality. Amidst all the noise, Powell's written opinion was a relatively lone, solo argument that not necessarily a major aspect of how the *Bakke* ruling was immediately perceived and felt.

But, in the years afterward, Powell's discussion of "diversity" became very influential in popularizing diversity rhetoric in colleges and businesses as a way to

legitimize race-based equity policies (Harper & Reskin 2005; Berrey 2015; Perea 2013) this argument was eventually applied to applicant gender and other differences. This written opinion came to be an important factor in American history and the development of the keyword "diversity," a tiny David who grew to become a Goliath. The 1978 *Bakke* case led to the rise of diversity goals as the legal framework which justified the continued existence of race-based policy, but did so at the expense of centering a civil rights framework and racial equity in favor of extolling the benefits of diversity and multiculturalism (Lipson 2008; Berrey 2015; Carr 2018). This primarily took place within the context of the neoliberal turn and the continued development of contemporary "culture wars" in the USA. As I describe in the following sub-section, the keyword "diversity" went from being an unimportant *element* and *moment* within the broader landscape of signs to being an important *nodal point* and *floating signifier* in our society today.

"Diversity" Grows Up: The Neoliberal Turn and the Rise of Mainstream Diversity Discourse

This second sub-section describes the growth of mainstream diversity discourse, which was popularized during the neoliberal and became hegemonic by the early twenty-first century. During this time, the USA experienced the solidification of colorblind racism and post-racial ideology as a transformed version of earlier racial backlash, meaning this era was the period wherein racial despotism made as strong comeback. I describe how new ideological agendas meant that diversity underwent a series of institutional and cultural *articulations* that shifted closer and closer to the status of *sedimented discourse.* I also discuss how the broader social contexts likely facilitated the

downfall of multiculturalism and diversity's rise. This sub-section concludes with a discussion of *Gratz* and *Grutter*, these two Supreme Court cases 2003 and 2004 that represented important moments of *antagonism, rearticulation,* and *closure* for the meanings and implications of "diversity" as a racialized keyword. In this period, the *signifying chains* of mainstream discourse were welded, and conventional meanings about "diversity" were constructed in relation to American norms of difference, equality, and race; ironically, this keyword which highlights difference also worked to reify important aspects of colorblind racial ideology and understandings of racialized policy.

Diversity discourse in the 1980's through the early 2000's was shaped by a combination of institutional practices and cultural shifts, within a context where the neoliberal turn profoundly reshaped America's racial attitudes, political ideology, and policy practices following the success of the Southern Strategy. During the 1980's and early 1990's, the GOP developed anti-affirmative-action strategies to more sharply mobilize white resentment in ways which served their political agenda. Within the context of its time, *Bakke* was one of several high-profile cases which both reflected and bolstered backlash towards race-based equity policy. By the beginning of the Reagan presidency, public opposition to affirmative action developed an indelible partisan characteristic, and demolishing equity policy at large was incorporated into the Republican agenda alongside the racialization of public attitudes about welfare and crime. This pattern continued through the 1980's and into the 1990's; alongside Reagan, vocal opponents of "affirmative action" included Senator Orrin Hatch and President George HW Bush. In 1996, a California voter referendum banned race and gender

preferences in admissions or employment; though not all were successful, anti-affirmative-action ballot initiatives have appeared in Texas, Washington, Florida, Nebraska, Arizona, New York, and Michigan (duRivage 1985; Harper and Reskin 2005; Pierce 2013). An anti-affirmative-action fervor continued to mobilize the GOP in the 1980's and 1990's, court cases, legislation, and voter referenda pursued the ultimate illegalization and banning of policies attentive to race in hiring and admissions (Harper and Reskin 2005; Lipson 2007; Lipson 2008).

During these times, company and college personnel looked to maintain some level of their organization's race-based equity policy, and similar policies related to gender. This motivation reflected a combination of these organizations' motivations for both fostering equality and responding to student-led activism and demands for change (Berrey; Anderson 2007), as well as for maintaining an image of complying with EEOC anti-discrimination regulations. As sociologists have described, we know today that colleges and companies in this time period generally held over-exaggerated understandings of what history has shown the power or punitive capability of the EEOC to be in reality (Lipson 2008; Collins 2011; Edeleman 2016). If nothing else, companies and colleges wanted to defend their race-based equity policy in fear of anti-discrimination law and similar laws in the wake of the Civil Rights era. But, these organizations were also attempting to navigate a contentious political climate wherein their relatively minor, voluntary policies had suddenly become a controversial and hot-button topic in American politics; fear of political reprisal and public backlash also motivated these organizations to rethink their equity policies in admissions and hiring.

Thus, several years after it was first written, the "diversity" rationale and language of Powell's written opinion was adopted by companies and colleges seeking to preserve yet modify their equity policies. Through the 1980's and into the 1990's, many private companies implemented diversity management policies and staff charged with maintain EEOC compliance began to institutionalize rhetoric about diversity. Kelly & Dobbin (1998) describe how personnel tasked with managing "affirmative action" in the business world shifted gears. By the late 1980's, these professionals and specialists were recasting racialized policy as part of "*diversity management* and touting the competitive advantages offered by these practices" (972, emphasis added). In 1986, the National Association of Manufactures stated that their industry benefited from new ideas, perspectives, and innovation fostered by a 'diverse' pool of employees. W*orkforce 2000,* a 1987 report by Hudson Institute, further bolstered budding diversity discourses, describing a future where demographic shifts, changing workforces, and shifting markets would force a modern company to "diverse" just to keep up. Diversity practices spread like wildfire; Collins (2011) states that by 1998, "75 percent of *Fortune 500* companies had programs promoting diversity" (524). Institutions began characterizing diversity as a competitive advantage, and important for maximizing profits and productivity (Kelly & Dobbin 1998; Lipson 2007). Business professionals and leaders spoke positively and proudly about such endeavors, touting the benefits of a diverse environment, such as superior productivity and market reach (Collins 2011; Berrey 2015).

Colleges implemented racialized policy by discussing increases in learning and productivity engendered by "diversity," or touting institutional diversity as a competitive advantage (Lipson 2008; Herring & Henderson 2011; Warikoo 2016). Berrey (2011)

describes how, in the 1980's, "university policies to accommodate racial minorities were more common but also facing greater legal restrictions and political backlash" (578); university officials began championing the school's diverse student body in response. Other schools began to follow suit. This began with Ivy League colleges and/or well-known, large institutions which dominated the college market in their state, but Hirschman and Berrey (2017) show that the implementation of diversity policy was widespread across a variety of college contexts, including even technical schools and community colleges.

Thus, diversity spread quickly, efficiently, and thoroughly. During the height of the neoliberal turn, wherein individualism and colorblindness were cemented as important parts of America's culture, policy, and State logics, "diversity" became an important part of America's cultural lexicon, shifting from insignificant *element* to an important *nodal point* around which various meanings, understandings, and other signs were constructed in *signifying chains* that had do within several relevant topic domains, particularly those pertaining to education and business in America. The flourishing of this keyword can be linked to several topic domains pertaining to racial difference and pluralism in the USA. "Diversity," in addition to being a cornerstone in legal language and being championed as a driver of productivity and modernization, was praised along the same logics associated with "multiculturalism" for celebrating racial difference yet ignoring racial inequality. Indeed, diversity did that job better, allowing for the complete discursive abandonment of race completely.

Once known for being a relatively conservative scholar when it came to race-based equity policy and ethnic pluralism, Nathan Glazer famously claimed "we are all

multiculturalists" now in 1997, indicative of how diversity and multiculturalism were becoming culturally legitimized and celebrated as important to the USA's cultural ethos and civic sphere (Kivisto 2012; Hartmann 2015). David O. Sears' presidential address at the 1995 Annual Meeting of the International Society Political Psychology (published in *Political Psychology* in 1996) describes the politics of multiculturalism with an eye to race-related issues and political-ideological cleavages in the USA. First, Sears describes how multicultural frameworks differ from three earlier frameworks related to dealing with race and ethnic difference in the USA: "conquest and replacement," "immigration and assimilation," and "residues of legalized discrimination." Sears states that multicultural narratives in the 1980's and 1990's were facilitated by how abstract celebration of the American "melting pot" still allowed the general public to hold unfavorable attitudes about redistributive policy related to racial inequality. Ladson-Billings (1996) illustrates how multicultural frameworks and related policy-logics do not do enough to highlight and address racial inequalities in the USA, particularly the marginalization and under-representation of Blacks under a system of structural racism. Such scholarly critiques have pointed to the shortcomings of "multiculturalism" since its heyday, foreshadowing similar critiques in the 21st century regarding diversity discourse.

Hartmann and Gerteis (2005) propose a model for conceptualizing theoretical models of multiculturalism along two primary dimensions: the social and the cultural. The former considers "the interactions among and between individuals, groups, and the nation," and the latter considers "the more normative basis for social order" (219). They describe four understandings of multiculturalism that exist in scholarly literature and the public mind with specific attention to understanding the tension between

multiculturalism's celebration of difference yet general public backlash towards redistributive policy or protected identities in the USA.

Thus, the *sedimented discourse* multiculturalism didn't fully disappear, but it did lose much of its power and scope. The irony of diversity's rise during the neoliberal turn actually becomes understandable when we consider that "multiculturalism" was at odds with the overall impetus of the neoliberal turn and colorblind racial ideology. From its inception, the various *articulations* of diversity that worked to normalize this language in college and corporate policy did so by invoking the meanings and understandings associated with "multiculturalism." Ultimately, the model of multiculturalism that acted as a platform for future mainstream diversity discourse was indeed replaced by it successor, dethroned by its progeny. This reflects a general social turn back towards racial despotism, abstractly allowing for some celebration of ethnoracial identities but ignoring or normalizing structural racial inequalities.

During the time period described in this sub-section, the rise of "diversity" as an important keyword and celebrated concept did little to stop the disastrous impacts of the neoliberal turn in American history; in some ways, "diversity" even facilitates neoliberal frameworks, as I describe later in this chapter. But, we should not be too hard on the keyword "diversity" at this time; while it didn't necessarily bring about a radical transformative change in our society, budding diversity discourse was significantly more progressive and liberal than most American discourses, antagonisms, and articulations during the neoliberal turn. Importantly, diversity had to grow up in an environment where anti-affirmative-action political mobilization was prominent and powerful. This brings me to my discussion of the *Gratz* (2003) and *Grutter* (2004) Supreme Court rulings.

These cases are often discussed in tandem, as each concerned the University of Michigan's race-based-admissions. Each of these cases upheld the *Bakke* rationale, and the resultant social conversation and debate also cemented validating mainstream diversity discourse as we know it today.

Within the history of race-based equity policy, University of Michigan has had a history of being at the forefront and in the national public eye (Anderson 2007; Berrey 2011; Berrey 2015). Ellen Berrey (2015), in Chapter 3 of her book *The Enigma of Diversity*, describes the series of events that led to the *Gratz* and *Grutter* cases. The past fifteen years had been witness to several other high-profile anti-affirmative-action cases, such as *Croson* (1989) and *Hopwood* (1996). Many of these cases were filed and argued for by conservative lawyers and organizations that have had an ongoing history, even today, of trying to take down equity policy in the USA. This maintained the highly politicized and controversial nature of the concept of "affirmative action" during the Neoliberal Turn; *Gratz* and *Grutter* thus represented another event in a series of such cases. The two white female students (Jennifer Gratz and Barbara Grutter), working with the libertarian organization Center for Individual Rights, filed lawsuits against the University of Michigan undergraduate program and law school for their rejected admissions in the late 1990's. Drawing on the same arguments from previous anti-affirmative-action lawsuits, such as "reverse discrimination," the cases moved through the court system, and were ruled upon 2003 and 2004 in the Supreme Court.

During the argumentation and public case proceedings at the Supreme Court, a large number of *amicus curiae* briefs were filed from businesses, colleges, and even the military arguing in favor of diversity policies as fundamental for institutional productivity

and success (Lipson 2008; Berrey 2011). Eventually, the Supreme Court ruled that Michigan's practice of assigning additional points to applicants based on their race was unconstitutional, but that a "subjective" assessment of individuals' differences in the pursuit of diversity was deemed acceptable, reaffirming the logic of Justice Powell's opinion from the 1978 *Bakke* (Lipson 2007; Leong 2013; Berrey 2015). Richardson and Lacendorfer (2004) perform a content analysis upon newspaper editorials to see how affirmative action was framed in conversations about the University of Michigan's policies. They describe how frameworks regarding remedying discrimination and/or preferential treatment, which had defined affirmative action conversations in decades prior, had been effectively replaced by "diversity" language and related discourse. The *Gratz* and *Grutter* cases, and the immediate social conversation they sparked, shows that by the by the mid 2000's, a certain understanding of diversity has become virtually hegemonic in the USA, what I refer to as "mainstream diversity discourse" in the following sub-section

Below, I describe contemporary mainstream discourse and sociological research in this topic area; I imagine that this section could be considered a "literature review" of sorts, as this is where I discuss contemporary scholarly findings and lines of inquiry that have come to define the sociological literature about diversity discourse. In this section, I also consider how my theory of diversity as a "racialized keyword" in comparison to existing sociological literature, particularly as related to future directions for this line of research.

Diversity Discourse in the 21st Century and Racial Neopopulism

This sub-section considers the Obama and Trump presidencies as the early-and-middle stages of a new period in the trajectory of racial politics, which I refer to as "Racial NeoPopulism." In this section I describe scholarly research about mainstream diversity discourse, which begins this period as *hegemonic*, a taken-for-granted *sedimented discourse* that acts as an important *nodal point* and *floating signifier* relevant to various other keywords, meanings, and discourses that have to do with racial difference, race-related topics, and racial ideology in the USA. I discuss various theorizations about diversity discourse that exist in the sociological literature and how my theory of racialized keywords stands to contribute a more comprehensive picture of the contemporary and future nature of "diversity." This section also discusses *rearticulations* of diversity which reflect our contemporary context but are still progenies of America's ongoing, historical racial contestation. In this new era, earlier norms of symbolic prejudices and colorblind-racism still dictate much of the meanings and discourses relevant for racial contestation today, but this third period also represents it own series of unique developments within the trajectory of racial politics. A new but familiar white populism, cultivated in the Obama years and bolstered by the Trump presidency, has shaped racial contestation and will shape the future of diversity discourse in the USA. The *signifying chains* are being reforged, and "diversity" is shifting towards the status of *floating signifier*, ripe for new phases of *(re)articulation* amidst the ideological *antagonisms* of our current moment. Thus, this section concludes with a discussion of the future scholars will have to consider for "diversity" and diversity discourse(s), which will be shaped by the racial contestation, ideological cleavages, and culture wars of an era of Racial Neopopulism.

Studying Mainstream Diversity Discourse

From the mid 2000's until today, mainstream diversity discourse has been an important part of America's cultural lexicon. Consider that even though the Supreme Court has become more conservative since the George W. Bush presidency, the diversity logic is still going strong. For example, the case *Fisher vs. University of Texas, Austin* was another instance of a white woman suing a university claiming reverse discrimination because of her race. The case, originally filed in 2009, bounced between lower-level and appellate courts before reaching the Supreme Court in 2016 as a slightly different legal entity, dubbed *Fisher II*. The Supreme Court, in a 7-1 decision, ruled in favor of the University, further upholding the *Bakke* logic and validating mainstream diversity discourse as described by Justice Powell (Perea 2013; Barnes, Chemerinsky, and Onwuachi-Willig 2015; Hurd and Plaut 2017). This logic, and the meanings associated with it, has defined "diversity" and mainstream diversity discourse in the USA today.

Mainstream diversity discourse in businesses, colleges, and state institutions is a virtually hegemonic affair. This reflects how such institutions have played a major role in the history that led to the popularization of "diversity." These arguments have been informed by a body of research on the benefits of diversity for social spaces, particularly colleges and businesses (Plaut, Thomas, and Goren 2009; Galinsky et al 2015). But, this keyword is not just an institutional logic anymore; it is a fundamental part of our cultural lexicon. Sociological literature has developed in the last decade that describes how Americans deploy mainstream diversity discourse when describing their parenting choices and what they believe is best for their kids (Underhill 2018; Woody 2020) and

when they discuss community settings such as the neighborhood association, (Burke 2012; Mayorga-Gallo 2014), community parks (Aptekar 2017) and religious organizations (Barron 2016; Okuwobi 2019). Overall, diversity has become strong in the American cultural mind. Nationally representative survey research from the Pew Research Center (2018) and data from the American Mosaic Project show that most Americans have positive attitudes towards the concept of diversity and social difference in general. To rephrase Glazer, we really are all diversity-ists now. In my view, there are three key aspects to mainstream diversity discourse: cherishing, pursuing, and leveraging "diversity."

Mainstream diversity discourse says that we must celebrate our diversity. From Fortune 500 companies to local book clubs, from massive colleges to small elementary schools, diversity is lauded and applauded. Additionally, diversity is an important goal to pursue; it is not just an interest, but an addiction. In the USA today, life, liberty, and the pursuit of diversity are sacrosanct. Businesses and colleges frequently make statements about the importance of increasing the representation of under-represented groups in their employees. Colleges often vocalize a desire to increase diversity in their student body. Many of the same institutions who brag about their diversity simultaneously vocalize the idea that they still want more, and more, diversity. But, cherishing and pursuing diversity come with an ulterior motive; the diversity we cherish and pursue must be *leveraged* to be worthwhile. Americans argue that being exposed diversity is good for institutions, themselves, and society at large. Diversity offers opportunity for new experiences, learning, social contacts, and inter-group interaction. People can learn about new cultures, particularly music, dance, food, and fashion. Diversity boosts teamwork and

leads to more dynamic ideas and problem solving, helping businesses to make profits and facilitating education in college. An important perceived and oft-highlighted benefit of diversity is that it is a cultivator of non-racism in individuals; colleges with thousands of students and parents of small children both apply this logic. Americans cherish and pursue diversity, but with the expectation of a payoff to be leveraged. Notably, an expectation of profit or benefit was not as foundational to earlier language and rhetoric of multiculturalism.

Sociological Literature about Mainstream Diversity Discourse

Within sociology, diversity policy and related discourse has been perhaps most-studied in colleges and university settings. Many researchers have used observational, interview, and evaluation methods to study how college administrators, faculty, and students think about the idea of "diversity" (Ahmed 2012; Berrey 2015; Hikido and Murray 2016; Warikoo 2016). Thomas (2018a, 2018b) has published multiple articles based on an ethnographic observation of diversity policy and diversity programming at a large university in the South. As discussed above, universities were among the first institutions to voluntarily implement affirmative action policy, and such apparatuses were shifted to diversity management. Thus, in the early decades of the 21st century, nearly all colleges have routinized pro-diversity-messages, diversity management, and/or diversity programming, often dedicating professional staff and resources to the pursuit of a diverse student body (Harper & Reskin 2005; Berrey 2015; Warikoo 2016; Hirschman and Berrey 2017).

Several authors have described diversity policy in the business sector (Kelly & Dobbin 1998; Williams, Kilanski, and Muller 2014; Edelman 2016). Evaluative research has considered the effectiveness of policies meant to pursue diversity in business institutions. Such policy uses a variety of metrics and contextual information to determine how different policy goals, articulations of difference, and managerial practices shape the ability of different diversity policies to increase workplace diversity (Kalev, Dobbin and Kelly 2006; Dobbin, Kalev and Schrage 2015). A focus on the representation of marginalized identities (or lack thereof) is one important aspect of such policy which can determine their effectiveness at increasing diversity. Qualitative, observational methods such as interviews, ethnography, and participant observation illustrate how businesses and their employees think about diversity. Collins (2011) describes how seventeen major Chicago businesses express a commitment to pursuing diversity, and Embrick (2011) interviews corporate managers about their company's diversity policy. As such research describes, business employees and management generally speak favorably and proudly about their company's diversity policies, although those conversations often reveal deeper complexities related to race and racial hierarchy in the USA; Collins (2011) and Embrick (2011) are also two prominent critics of the shortcomings of diversity discourse in businesses, a theme which more recent publications continue to expound (e.g., Berrey 2015; Edelman 2016).

In the sociological literature, a newer but growing direction is studying diversity discourse in non-institutional settings, such as the neighborhood and community. By extension, this would include research in churches, parks, and K-12 schools. Mayorga-Gallo (2014), Tissot (2014), Aptekar (2017), Underhill (2018), Hoekstra and Gerteis

(2019), Woody (2020), and Darrah-Okike, Harvey, and Fong (2020) are some examples of this turn. Research on diversity discourse in religious congregations shows that some churches prioritize facilitating diversity in their congregation, albeit these churches do so in a fairly uncritical manner (Cobb, Perry, and Dougherty 2015; Barron 2016). Pro-diversity discourse has been discussed in researched in relation to parenting, childhood, and family practices. For example, white parents say that they try to expose their children to different cultures and minority groups by enrolling in multiracial schools or bringing their children to racially diverse parks. Parents cast such experience as a competitive advantage and important for cultivating non-racism (Aptekar 2017; Underhill 2018; Woody 2020). Diversity discourse and celebrating difference features in how people describe their home buying and neighborhood preferences (Darrah-Okike, Harvey, and Fong 2020).

I've mostly focused on the Supreme Court in this chapter as an example of State practices and "diversity," as the precedent set there and in other State and legal settings was pivotal to the growth of mainstream diversity discourse. That said, such discourse is relevant to all levels of the State, from the Federal to the local. Even small local and municipal governments have internalized the pursuit of diversity. For example, Voyer (2011) studies diversity trainings sponsored by local government and describes how these seminars teach participants "the vocabulary, outlook and style of communication required of those who would be identified as open and deeply multicultural" (1880). She expands on this work in her book (2013), *Strangers and Neighbors: Multiculturalism, Conflict, and Community in America.* This research is connected to a larger research project of studying how a small town in the Northeast implements pro-diversity rhetoric and

diversity programming following racial tensions and backlash towards growing immigrant communities. Berrey's (2015) research on Chicago neighborhoods also shows how diversity can appear in local government in her discussion of how activists, business interests, and local politicians use "diversity" language to pursue their own aims.

Thus, across a variety of social settings, sociologists have studied "diversity" and related discourse, often with attention to how individuals and institutions discuss the keyword in relation to race, gender, and inequality. Below, I discuss this line of inquiry in other disciplines.

Multidisciplinary Research about "Diversity"

My above discussion has presented the literature with a focus on sociological authors, but I should make it clear that the general social science literature has similar methods and takeaways as the work cited above. Furthermore, it would be inaccurate to suggest that sociologists necessarily beat all other fields to the punch when studying "diversity." One area which could make a more legitimate claim to starting research about diversity discourse in the USA would be critical legal studies and other disciplines which draw upon historical-institutonalist frameworks. Focusing the nature of political logic, legal frameworks, and the literal letter of the law, authors have studied the functions, nature, and consequences of "diversity" in state policy have been studied for decades (i.e. duRivage 1985). Vocal endorsements and commitments to diversity have become common in state institutions, and the keyword "diversity" has been legally enshrined and culturally sanctioned by state language, legislation, and practices since the *Bakke* case. As discussed above, the diversity rationale has been upheld by the Federal

government by several Supreme Court cases, leading to a ripple effect where different state offices have officially taken up the diversity mantle (Leong 2013; Barnes, Chemerinsky, and Onwuachi-Willig 2015). An obvious example is the EEOC, given the history of civil rights, equity policy, and backlash as described above.

A long body of literature has discussed issues of representation and inequality in the media. Within this area, "diversity" is a term frequently used by scholars and laypersons alike to discuss the lack of adequate and fair representation. For decades, researchers have shown that representation of POC in mainstream media has been lacking, and that POC characters are often stereotyped and typecast in problematic ways (Gray 2013; Gray 2016; Smith and Thakore 2016; Lindner and Barnard 2020). This is a longstanding tale, but it is in a state of explosion and development at the current time. Phenomena such as #OscarssoWhite and the success of films such as *Crazy Rich Asians* --- as well as the surrounding backlash –highlight that we are in an important inflection point for media diversity in the USA. This literature has grown with the times, and more recent publications from this research area have considered sociological understandings about mainstream diversity discourse in contemporary explorations of diversity in mainstream media (Yuen 2017; Chattoo 2018). This area has fewer practitioners who are strictly sociologists, but this is an area where social science in general will continue to grow in response to cultural shifts and social change.

Several scholars, such as Miguel Unzueta and Delia Baldassarri, have been leaders in a body of experimental research, often informed by psychology and social psychology; this literature has studied the ins-and-outs of attitudes towards "diversity" through a variety of creative and specifically-designed research instruments. Most

research in this area draw on experimental or survey methods, and a synthesized reading of such research (e.g. Unzueta and Binning 2010; Unzueta, Knowles, and Ho 2012; Bauman, Trawalter, and Unzueta 2014; Dover, Major, and Kaiser 2016; Danbold and Unzueta 2020; Abascal, Wu, and Baldarassi 2021) corroborates several of the themes relevant to understanding "diversity" in the context of *keywords, discourses, signifying chains, antagonisms,* and *articulations.* The ways participants think about and respond to a variety of different items that manipulate the framing and application of the word "diversity" illustrates that racial identity and beliefs about race, policy, and equality in America, as well as attitudes towards other identities such as gender (e.g. Wilton et al 2018) are all relevant to diversity discourse. Essentially, such research provides important empirical insights that collectively illustrate the various functions, complexities, and contradictions of diversity as a racialized keyword. I believe the findings from such research have done some of the most empirically-important work in demonstrating that "diversity" has no clear and consistent definition, and that attitudes towards this concept are wrapped up in a bevy of other meanings and ideological cleavages implicated in our contemporary culture wars.

Thus, there are several major and ongoing research traditions wherein sociologists and other scholars have studied mainstream diversity discourse in the USA. Hidden layers, inconsistencies, and problematic consequences of mainstream diversity discourse have been the subject of much academic consternation, particularly when it comes to thinking about diversity as related to race and racial issues in America. By the time of this writing, a substantial sociological and interdisciplinary body of research informed by critical race theory has developed a critical consensus about mainstream diversity

discourse. Reading such work was my own introduction to the academic study of "diversity," and I describe it in more detail below. These critiques have only grown in the time I've been in graduate school, and they now dominate how most contemporary sociological work approaches the study of diversity discourse across a variety of settings, this project included. These critiques highlight the shortcomings of mainstream understandings of "diversity," and such work illustrates the nature of social world today as constituted by historical and contemporary racial contestation and the culture wars.

(Critically) Theorizing Diversity Discourse

Within the literature, I see four common academic critiques of mainstream diversity discourse as relevant to issues of marginalization and inequality in our society. The keyword's (a) definitional flexibility, perhaps the root cause of all other critiques, allows diversity to mean virtually *anything*. This relates to (b) how diversity frameworks prove a poor defense of equity policy and the goal of redressing inequalities, (c) how diversity language works in ways that centers whiteness, and (d) how the valorization of diversity reifies racial hierarchy by enabling colorblind ideology and/or representing a new racial ideology of its own.

The keyword diversity is ubiquitous and widely recognized, but consistent definitions of are difficult to come by. David Embrick (2016) writes, "Since I began studying diversity over a decade and a half ago, the number of categories that has been included, in various ways, under the broad umbrella of diversity has expanded dramatically" (225). In several of the publications cited in this project, scholars have discussed the wide variety of personal differences that participants and organizations frame as belonging under the "diversity" mantle, some which are very far removed from

emphasis on race, gender, or other marginalized identities; examples include being left-handed, owning cats versus dogs, and having different hobbies (e.g. Marvasti and McKinney 2011; Moore and Bell 2011; Warikoo and de Novais 2015; Thomas 2018a; Petts 2020). Such differences are celebrated, pursued, and leveraged in the same way as more substantive, primal differences such as race and gender. This hyper-inclusive and vague nature of diversity discourse can be considered a root cause of discursive and ideological characteristics of mainstream diversity discourse which uphold racial hierarchy. The lens of racial projects as contesting agendas between racial democracy and racial despotism allows us to see how the definitional vagueness of "diversity" can enable both of these contrasting poles. It is upon this definitional vagueness that competing racial projects are pursued and enacted, wherein racial despotism maintains its hold over a seemingly anti-racist, racial-democracy discourse.

Diversity is the dominant characterization of difference and logic for talking about social difference. As Berrey (2015) writes, multiculturalisms' near-disappearance in the face of diversity language reflects how "diversity" allows for more inattention to racial injustice. Unlike multicultural discourses which spoke specifically to race, civic belonging, and national identity, and unlike colorblind and assimilationist discourse which attempts to homogenize, integrate, and erase difference, diversity discourse is softer and vague; it both celebrates difference while avoiding a specific stance about a specific difference. Thus, a direct consequence, and possible intention, of hyper-inclusive diversity discourse is the watering-down of attention to inequality, discrimination, and marginalization within institutions and society. Several authors have explored how pro-diversity messages in higher education can ignore racial inequality and even enable racial

hierarchy, particularly when diversity is presented in a race-neutral way (e.g. Moore and Bell 2011; Smith and Mayorga-Gallo 2017; Thomas 2018a). A similar theme has been revealed by sociological research about mainstream diversity discourse in businesses (Embrick 2011; Collins 2011; Edelman 2016). Thus, mainstream diversity discourse represents an ironic colorblind multiculturalism, both valorizing racial difference yet upholding post-racial beliefs that racial difference should be ignored, along with overlooking racial inequality.

Diversity discourse has been interrogated for themes of centralizing whiteness, upholding white normativity, and perpetuating the idea of POC as the "Other" in American culture; mainstream diversity discourse speaks to a pluralist vision of celebrating racial difference, but actually reifies white supremacy and centers white identities (Burke 2012; Marvasti & McKinney 2011; Mayorga-Gallo 2019). Whites can use diversity language to discuss themes of fun, cultural exchange, and harmony as related to racial difference (Hikido & Murray 2016; Warikoo and Deckman 2014). Several authors describe how whites center their own experiences in conversations about why diversity should be celebrated (Marvasti & McKinney 2011; Hikido & Murray 2016; Warikoo 2016; Woody 2020). This often allows whites to ignore racial inequality or simply acknowledge racial inequality in the abstract (Embrick 2011; Woody 2020; Mayorga-Gallo 2019). Diversity can center white and whiteness while essentializing minority persons and non-white cultures. Authors have discussed how diversity initiatives in colleges can privilege the learning and comforts of white students over students of color (Warikoo & Deckman 2014; Warikoo & deNovais 2015; Hikido & Murray 2016). This upholds white normativity by characterizing minorities as nothing

more than the products of their culture, commodifying non-white culture as a consumer good for whites, and giving whites figurative pats-on-the-back and congratulations for deigning to try different ethnic cuisines or watch a non-English movie. This centering of whiteness is an important aspect to how mainstream diversity discourse functions to maintain racial hierarchy, white supremacy, and racial despotism.

Mainstream diversity discourse and its definitional flexibility have been called a weak defense and justification for equity policy. Lipson (2007, 2008), Leong (2013), Edelman (2016), Stulberg and Chen (2013), and other scholars have discussed how the goals of equity policy originally implemented in the 1960's and 1970's are still unfulfilled. Racial underrepresentation and stratification continues in employment, education, and salaries; there is not enough space in this dissertation to cite all the social science that empirically and concretely proves that society is racially stratified in a myriad of ways (Alexander 2011; Reskin 2012; Desmond and Emirbayer 2009). Though diversity is a language used to defend policies which are supposed to facilitate equality and representation, colorblind and hyper-inclusive diversity discourse can enable institutional "diversity management" policies that do very little to address marginalization or under-representation. Sometimes, the real goal is the simple signal that such policies send to the EEOOC: "we are non-discriminatory." The lack of punch in mainstream diversity discourse as a justification for equity policy can be seen in congruent support for "diversity" but disdain for "affirmative action." For example, Embrick (2011) describes how participants in his study who are positive about diversity still speak adversely about affirmative action frames. Warikoo (2016) highlights how

some elite white college students grudgingly support race-based admissions policy for the sake fostering a diverse, fun campus experience instead of remedying racial inequality. In institutions which champion diversity, several students and employees are ambivalent or opposed to race-based equity policy, even some who are vocally pro-diversity; scholars point to this in their critiques of contemporary diversity discourse's inattention to racial justice (Moore and Bell 2011; Berrey 2015; Warikoo 2016; Smith and Mayorga-Gallo 2017). Thus, a large body of academic work has interrogated how mainstream diversity discourse as a policy framework needs serious transformation before it truly becomes a powerful agent of progressive change. At the moment, mainstream diversity discourse as an equity policy framework can enable racial hierarchy and racial despotism by tempering the original racial project of advancing racial democracy.

In sum, years of academic literature and critiques of mainstream diversity discourse have crystallized into showing how diversity discourse (a discourse once championed for the goals of challenging racism and racial inequality) can actually uphold racial hierarchy. In sociology, analytic frameworks of diversity discourse as "Happy Talk" and of a "diversity ideology" generally are focusing on mainstream diversity consensus, aptly critiquing its shortcomings and how it upholds racial hierarchy. Beginning with Bell and Hartmann's (2007) "Happy talk" thesis about diversity discourse, sociologists have theorized how diversity maintains racial hierarchy. Some scholars are developing the terminology of the "Diversity Ideology" to capture how several issues with mainstream diversity discourse work to mystify racial inequality and maintain entrenched racial hierarchy.. This describes how pro-diversity-messages extol

difference in general without thought to racial hierarchy (e.g., Embrick 2011; Smith and Mayorga-Gallo 2017; Doane 2017; Woody 2020). The diversity ideology actually works to obfuscate, normalize, or mystify racial inequality, allowing whites to acknowledge it in the abstract at most (Mayorga-Gallo 2019); scholars working in this theoretical strain often see diversity ideology as a new racial ideology of its own rather than as a part of colorblind racial ideologies. This distinction matters, but I do not wish to commit this project to one perspective or the other. To me, the difference between how Berrey (2015) and Mayorga-Gallo (2019) theorize "diversity" is a theorization about only a piece of the puzzle, a theoretical and analytic perspective that sociologists have been too focused on and may soon be outdated.

As I describe in the following sections, new direction and rearticulations of diversity discourse challenge our existing ideas about a shared mainstream diversity discourse or a dominant racial ideology. Ultimately, while a certain "diversity" exists as a discursive and ideological mainstay in our society's State, institutions, and culture, this racialized keyword is *not* a monolith. The tenets of racial formation theory and poststructuralist discourse theory illustrate that the meanings and implications of "diversity" will necessarily change now and in the future, as racial contestation and ideological battles are still generative forces upon our social world. Therefore, the sub-section below considers new directions for studying diversity in the context of Racial Neopopulism, particularly recent *rearticulations* of diversity that complicate the current sociological theorization and consensus about diversity discourse.

A Mid-Life Crisis? New Directions for "Diversity" in the Current Moment

Mainstream diversity discourse has been studied extensively, as described above. But, there are new directions to consider for the future of diversity discourse in the USA. Some of these represent extensions and continuations of the implications we are familiar with as relevant to mainstream diversity discourse. Others involve conceptualizing how diversity discourse is going to grow in relevance to other topic domains and studying how new forms of diversity discourse work within the overarching social context of racial contestation and the culture wars. Below, I present these new directions in three main clusters. First, I consider some contemporary questions relevant to studying "diversity" as related to traditional research sites, such as diversity in organizations and diversity in the media. Second, I consider a direction which is gaining traction but needs more: how will "diversity discourse" relate to ideological and social responses towards our changing nation? Third and finally, I discuss nascent trends in the rearticulation of "diversity" which force us to think beyond mainstream diversity discourse. As Omi and Winant describe, *rearticulation* takes key frames and ideas associated with a concept and turn them on their head. Thus, while these new directions for diversity discourse are based on the same tenets of mainstream diversity discourse, we should understand their differences such. Within the battle between racial democracy and racial despotism, mainstream diversity sits fairly in the center. I predict that new articulations of diversity discourse in era of Racial NeoPopulism will be more polarized, literally closer to the poles on the ends of the spectrum than the center; such trends are already appearing.

As described above, there are several ongoing lines of inquiry in research about diversity discourse that will have to be attentive to contemporary challenges and changes in our social world as relevant to "diversity." One of these is the intersection of diversity

rhetoric and equity policy in colleges and businesses. Importantly, the political Right has not given up on attacking "affirmative action." Edward Blum, who works for the right-leaning American Enterprise Institute, has been a puppet-master behind several high-profile anti-affirmative action cases, including *Fisher* and *Fisher II*, surprising when we consider that Mr. Blum isn't even an official lawyer; his job title is "legal strategist" or "legal consultant." He and his conservative buddies have now retuned their strategy, ditching white women as the face of victimization of affirmative action in favor of propping up Asian-Americans as unfairly impacted by diversity and equity policy in colleges; I hope it comes as no surprise that Blum and company were key to *Students for Fair Admission vs. Harvard*, another high-profile anti-affirmative-action lawsuit which has been moving through the court system since its 2014 filing; in February 2021, Students for Fair Admissions (a misnomer if there ever was one; Blum and the group's other founders all graduated long ago) filed an appeal with the Supreme Court. Scholars and activists must stay on our toes; even if Blum and his cronies lose this case, they certainly will be back again. Another continuing direction in scholarship about diversity will be representation in Hollywood and media. In the past few years, we have seen relatively more POC and non-male characters in scripts that traditionally have minimized such identities, but pay gaps, typecasting, and narrowcasting remain in the media (Lindner and Barnard 2020). Thus, the media is another area where scholars and activists should expect continued social conversation and ideological contestation regarding diversity, representation, and equality.

There are also newer, less-studied directions to consider for "diversity" and related discourse. Increasing national and community diversity in Western countries has

often been framed in terms of ethnoracial, immigration-spurred demographic change. Understanding social responses and ideological interpretations of such change has been the subject of an international body of social science literature; much of this research is quantitative, drawing on demographic and survey research to consider how local diversity affects community relations. In the post Civil Rights era and changes in immigration law, the color line was reshaped as Hispanic and Asian populations grew (Lee and Bean 2010). In addition, there has been a rise in mixed-race families and mixed-race persons in the USA (Frey 2018; Alba 2019). Today, several authors have put forward various theories regarding racial identity, racial formation, and racial hierarchy in a growingly multiracial America (i.e. Kim 1999; Bonilla-Silva 2004; Golash-Boza 2016). There are several ways diversity discourse is and will be implicated in academic conversations and cultural responses to the contemporary "browning of America." Two which I discuss here include (a) whether diversity discourse will shape how people think about a changing nation, and (b) how diversity discourse will prove relevant to changing communities.

In the USA, scholars have also studied social beliefs and responses to the idea of changing demographics and a majority-minority nation. Generally speaking, the social response is not overwhelmingly positive. Experimental and survey research has shown how Americans, particularly whites, have negative reactions about the browning of America (Danbold and Huo 2015; Craig, Rucker and Richeson 2018a; Craig, Rucker, and Richeson 2018b), and such attitudes have been linked to political partisanship, the 2016 election, and support for the Trump presidency (Knowles and Tropp 2018; Mutz 2018; Myers and Levy 2018). As Hochschild's (2016) *Strangers in their Own Land* shows, shifting community characteristics are powerful motivators of conservative backlash

within the current era of politics. Other authors have discussed how beliefs, and misbeliefs, about changing demographics can be linked to social and cultural backlash about a changing USA in ways emblematic of the ongoing "culture wars" in the USA (Alba, Rumbaut, and Marotz 2005; Gallagher 2014; Lawrence and Sides 2014). This is also an important site where new racial projects have taken hold; to apply and Omi and Winant's framework, we can consider the Trump campaign's demonization of Hispanics and immigration as a new moment for the solidification of racial despotism, an adaption by agents of racial hierarchy to deal with a changing racial landscape.

Another new direction to consider is how diversity discourse relates to demographic change. An international literature, often considering change in the USA as well as similar shifts in Europe and Australia, has studied the impacts of changing communities on social capital in the locale. Putnam (2007) has famously put forward the "constrict thesis," positing that increasing ethnoracial diversity in community has negative impacts on community cohesion and social capital; this has sparked a major research debate, with findings both corroborating and challenging the constrict thesis' general premise; sociological articles which review this literature include Abascal and Baldarassi (2015), Portes and Vickstrom (2011) and, van der Meer and Tolsma (2014). Often, such research has framed their inquiry as testing *racial threat* theory (Blalock 1967; Blumer 1958; Defina and Hannon 2009; Knowles and Tropp 2018) versus *group contact* theory (Allport 1954; Schmid 2014; Hewstone 2015). The former suggests that perceptions of threat manifest between members of in-group and out-groups as community ethnoracial diversity and proximity rises, but the latter suggests that inter-

group interaction actually allows can actually increase trust and social cohesion between in-groups and out-groups.

We should develop existing research about diversity discourse in diversifying locales to consider how social change and shifting demographics relate to diversity discourse. Ethnographic, interview and/or focus-group research in diversifying communities finds that Americans in such settings say outwardly positive things about increased local diversity and difference (Voyer 2011; Burke 2012; Mayorga-Gallo 2014; Berrey 2015; Hoekstra and Gerteis 2019). In community settings such as parks and neighborhood gardens, researchers have found that residents speak positively about diversity and celebrate the difference in their locale, at least on the surface of such conversations (Tissot 2014; Aptekar 2017). This reveals a tension between tenets of mainstream diversity discourse that celebrate ethnoracial difference versus the premise of the constrict thesis and findings about negative reactions towards changing demographics. This tension must be explored further.

Scholars should consider how diversity discourse affects such attitudes and relates to the normative beliefs behind them; can diversity discourse be fostered to overcome negative backlash towards a shifting USA? The findings from the diversity discourse literature point to some such possibilities, based on general positivity that comes across in interviews, but that may be an issue of social desirability bias. Indeed, most of the authors cited above as examples of such findings also draw on critical race theory to illustrate that mainstream diversity discourse goes hand-in-hand with racial attitudes, ideologies, and beliefs that work to uphold racial hierarchy. Diversity discourse falls short again, it seems. As this country continues to become ethnoracially diverse, critical scholars must

work to foster a more progressive diversity discourse that combines celebrating multiracial difference with (a) challenging cultural and social stigmas regarding different racial identities and (b) highlighting how multiracial America still maintains inequality between racial groups. Otherwise, we will continue to see an USA where some people vocally celebrate racial difference yet racial hierarchy runs rampant; mainstream diversity discourse will insulate racial despotism rather than advancing racial democracy in such a future.

In terms of my own theoretical framework, we must acknowledge that using the word "diversity" in the context of demographic change and majority-minority narrative is itself a new series of articulations, and potential antagonisms, that create new signifying chains relevant to the nodal point and floating signifier that is "diversity." The conflation of diversity as a language of ethnoracial shifts in the USA may seem natural—after all, it makes sense—but this represents another instance wherein certain meanings that seem "natural" represent a culmination of social struggle and discursive battle. The fact that ethnoracial change seems so "naturally" unusual in the USA is itself a product of centuries of white supremacy and related history education in our schools today, which have overblown the nature of this country as a monolithically white entity. From a critical race theory perspective, "whitewashed histories" have been a damning issue in the USA; the average American is pretty much clueless about the true history of ethnoracial difference (i.e., "diversity") on this continent and in this nation's historical development (Spickard 2007; Parillo 2009). A multiracial, multiethnic world existed before European colonialism created the systems of race and racism that shaped our modern world; essentially, diversity actually predates "race." Nevertheless, diversity discourse is now

implicated in understanding and conceptualizing racial difference in the USA today. Thus, there is a new direction of (a) studying how mainstream diversity discourse will or won't work to facilitate a more racially-just, pro-immigration nation, and the meta-direction of (b) studying how social conversation, legislation, and scholarship about such change itself resents a series of articulations that could lead to new meanings and consequences of the keyword "diversity" as related to racial contestation in the USA.

Finally, I point to a direction which remains quite understudied: how diversity can be *rearticulated*, sometimes in ways which are completely antithetical to the goals of diversity as an anti-racist, pro-equity concept. In my opinion, the most-pressing area for more critical, scholarly inquiry is in the functions of contemporary far-Right rearticulations of "diversity." As I discuss, the political Right and proponents of racial despotism have begun weaponizing diversity discourse in new, novel ways that work to further racial inequality and insulate racial hierarchy. But, there are positives to consider; a recent trend in how "diversity" is framed alongside goals of equity potentially reflects a more progressive version of diversity discourse, perhaps a consequence of critical scholarship about mainstream diversity discourse and a general undercurrent of activism and mobilization in pursuit of racial democracy.

As I described earlier in this chapter, the rise of colorblind racism has been described by Omi and Winant as a form of *rearticulation.* Today, to apply Omi and Winant's framework, "diversity" is being rearticulated; social actors take core tents of mainstream diversity and apply them in ways that actually challenge the idea of an equitable, just, and diverse society. There are several instances of prominent cultural and political elites who have leveraged the basic premises and idea of mainstream American

diversity discourse in pursuit of these new rearticulations; such distortions often manifest in phrases such as "diversity of thought," "diversity of opinion," and "viewpoint diversity." These nascent but growing variations of diversity discourse consider another axiom of difference as important for diversity and fostering difference: thought and belief. The argument is that "diversity of thought" is good for intellectualism and social conversation. On the surface, this idea seems innocuous enough, and at the surface-level, I do not disagree with the general proposition that students, employees, and society at large stands to benefit from being exposed to a variety of worldviews, perspectives, and opinions. What is concerning, however, is how phrases such as "diversity of thought" are being weaponized by the political Right in ways that are specifically designed to maintain white supremacy, patriarchy, and social hierarchies in the USA. This is accomplished by leveraging "diversity of thought" as a counterargument to the idea that certain political figures, parties, and beliefs are being denied legitimacy. But, the political figures, parties, and beliefs in question are openly bigoted and discriminatory, often entrenched in the far-Right and committed to opposing "the Left," undermining "the liberal academy," and upholding white patriarchy.

I imagine several readers of this paper are familiar with how "diversity of thought" can be weaponized; the following account is just one example of this general phenomena and challenge facing higher education institutions. In 2017, Milo Yiannopoulos—a far-Right political commentator who has been critiqued for being a font of racist and sexist garbage—was scheduled to speak at UC-Berkeley. This sparked protests and backlash on the day of, and the speaking engagement was cancelled. Across mainstream media news outlets and punditry, there was as a resulting outpouring that

"diversity of thought" is important for students, colleges, and society at large; an agreeable point in the abstract, perhaps. But, we must critically consider who is parroting these messages and why. Ultimately, the people who clamor for "diversity of thought" are not actually interested in respecting, honoring, and exploring a variety of worldviews and perspectives; they just want far-right, neo-Nazi speakers to be able come to college campuses unobstructed.

Today, "diversity of thought" and its cousins represent new rearticulations of the racialized keyword diversity. Indeed, this is another example of the same phenomenon of rearticulation described by Omi and Winant as related to "colorblindness." This keyword used to just mean, "Don't judge people based on their race," more or less. But, this simple narrative and framework associated with anti-racism and challenging discrimination was politically and culturally co-opted so as to defend racism and racial hierarchy. So thorough, staunch, and long-lived was this rearticulation that today, colorblind racial ideology is a commonly recognized entity within social science and humanities, an overarching defining social norm that has enabled racial hierarchy in a myriad of complex ways. Now, we see that "diversity"—a keyword once associated with celebrating racial difference and inclusion of marginalized groups—is being rearticulated in ways that over-apply its core tenets in pursuit of working *against* the aims of diversity policies and critical goals. Though this author feels it is unlikely that "Diversity of thought" discourse will become a cultural hegemon in the same ways of colorblind racism, I am confident that these rearticulations are on the rise. Importantly, these rearticulations are already being used and incorporated in Right-wing and far-Right platforms as part of such groups' rhetorical strategies and overall agendas. Consider the

vignette in my Introductory chapter regarding a state bill in Florida, which Governor DeSantis recently signed. Under the guise of "diversity of thought," the GOP is encouraging Americans to lash out against the academy and critical race theory. Thus, an important and pressing endeavor will be challenging how these rearticulations work within the general context of racial contestation and culture wars in the USA.

To reiterate, "diversity of thought" itself makes sense; I do not take issue with the normativity of the idea abstract. Indeed, one could see why "diversity of thought" matters when we consider that the American Senate, House, presidency, Supreme Court, and government generally are much whiter and more male than the American population. Sociologists of knowledge and intersectional feminists have discussed how sub-altern, marginialized populations have unique knowledges that are unrecognized by the mainstream. Therefore, the sentence, "There should be more minorities and women in Congress because there is no diversity of thought," is correct; critical authors should agree with that general premise, as do I. But, I take issue with the more-commonly occurring sentence within the far-Right: "Banning Alex Jones from speaking at this college is censorship; the Left doesn't respect diversity of thought!" Frankly, such rearticulations of diversity are maneuvers of white supremacy, patriarchy, and other systems of hierarchy and power that prevail in the USA. This area is the most ripe, I believe, for sociological attention and focus. Apart from the wealth of research questions and research projects left unexplored in this area, critical social science and sociology must be ready and equipped to battle rearticulations of diversity and nascent diversity discourses that undermines and attacks the critical, equity-oriented frameworks that motivates critical race theory and a commitment to racial democracy.

That said, there are also rearticulations of diversity that have potential to pursue justice and racial democracy. Academic critiques of mainstream diversity discourse have existed for years now; such efforts have been at least somewhat fruitful in effecting social change, which is not something all scholarly research traditions can claim. In the last few years, we have seen the growth of new "NeoLeft" diversity discourse, which represents an evolved version of mainstream diversity discourse that reflects attention to critiques**.** Currently, my alma matter no longer has a "Diversity" office; that office has been renamed "The Office of *Equity* and Diversity" (emphasis added). Studying such sites where diversity discourse appears to have gained a more progressive, critical edge is of utmost importance. From a sociological perspective, we generally know that institutional messages and institutional policy impacts often are far removed; does a shift towards "Diversity and Equity" indicate an actual systematic shift in how a college's diversity management works? If sociologists, critical race theorists, and academics from any background whatsoever are to effectively pursue a diversity discourse which works in strong anti-racist ways, it is important for us to study and nurture spaces where diversity is being rearticulated in a more progressive manner. Undoubtedly, many such instances of an "Office of Equity and Diversity" will exist within contexts of racial stratification, under-representation, and institutional hierarchy, but we must find ways to bolster more progressive versions of diversity discourse. We must also study what does and does not enable such rearticulations to effectively pursue and protect racial democracy in the USA. To reiterate, now is not the time to give up on "diversity;" if anything, we must rescue this racialized keyword.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a genealogy of "diversity" discourse in the USA, based on how this term and related discourse evolved in the post-Civil Rights era of American history. The chapter frames this history in the context of three historical periods. The first of these periods considers the events of the Civil Rights movement and the resulting racial and political backlash which culminated in the Southern Strategy. The second of these periods considered the rise of neoliberalism and colorblind racial ideology, spanning from the Reagan presidency to the early Obama years. Finally, the third of these periods is the period of "racial neopopulism," taking shape in the latter Obama years and growing more solid after the Trump election. Each of these three periods has been driven by a history of competing racial projects which have evolved to inform the continuing culture wars today in the USA; though the Civil Rights movement represented a major push for racial democracy, such change was tempered by the events of the neoliberal turn. The era of racial neopopulism is currently defined by the new face of mobilization in pursuit of racial democracy and the longstanding political, ideological platforms which have driven racial despotism in the past.

Thus, the history, contemporary use, and future implications of all varieties of "diversity" diversity discourse is a direct product of an ongoing clash between varying racial projects in pursuit of racial democracy and racial despotism. In fact, these three periods have shaped not only the story of "diversity," but virtually all of social life in the USA. The material and cultural arrangements of our society, particularly those that have to do with power and inequality, have been greatly constituted by the historical periods described in this chapter, and the current period represents another chapter in a general

history of evolving culture wars, ideological cleavages, and racial contestation in the USA.

The events of the civil rights movement, the minority rights revolution, and the Southern Strategy set the stage for legal rulings, policy logic, and institutional practices wherein diversity discourse would first take shape. During this time, the Civil Rights movement spurred a cultural shift towards racial democracy and a fundamental change in America's racial paradigm (Omi and Winant 2015). The Civil Rights era was witness to various legislation and policy changes in pursuit of equality and redressing discrimination; during the 1950's and 1960's, the earliest forms of what would come to be known as "affirmative action" policies were enacted. Mobilizing cultural backlash and white racial resentment towards such policy was an important part of the political realignment known as the "Southern Strategy," wherein Republican politicians, think tanks, and strategists actively cultivated support with white Southern voters.

"Multiculturalism" was more common in this time period than it is today; Thus, alongside a series of anti-affirmative-action legislation and lawsuits, the *Bakke* case was another important high-profile case which galvanized attitudes about affirmative action. Though its consequences did not necessarily manifest overnight, this case was an important moment for the evolution of "diversity" as a racialized keyword. In the vocabulary of my theory, *Bakke* was sparked by a series of ideological contestation which drove a series of *articulations* and *antagonisms* which attempted to affix certain meanings to *signs* within the *order of discourse* related to topic domains of race, equality, and policy. Within the *Bakke* case, Justice Powell's written opinion represented a particular *articulation* of "diversity" which solidified an important *signifying chain* for

what we know as mainstream diversity discourse today: the importance of diversity for institutional productivity and effectiveness.

The popularization of the word "diversity" took place primarily in the neoliberal era, as diversity became a prevailing logic for equity-based policy in the face of politicized backlash, gaining cultural legitimacy and popularity during this time. The Reagan administration and general Republican practice pursued anti-affirmative-action agendas with fervor, indicative of a continued fusing of conservative politics and racial despotism. During this time, businesses and colleges shifted towards institutionalizing diversity rhetoric, drawing on the logic of Powell's ruling about the constitutional legitimacy of pursuing diversity. Colorblind racism and post-racial ideology become an important part of the USA's cultural fabric and institutional logic during this time period, a potential driver of how "diversity" quickly took the place of "multiculturalism" as the language of celebrating racial and ethnic difference in the USA; mainstream diversity discourse became popular because it offered a more colorblind concept for framing social difference in the USA. We can consider these institutional and cultural shifts as another series of *articulations* in the context of ongoing *antagonisms* as shaped by racial contestation. The keyword diversity became an important *nodal point* at this time period, which was solidified by the *Gratz* and *Grutter* cases. The conversation surrounding these cases and the number of organizations who defended diversity policies indicated that a certain understanding of "diversity," a mainstream diversity discourse, had reached the status of *sedimented discourse,* a product of the ongoing challenge between differing *racial projects*.

The third period described above, a period of "Racial NeoPopulism," follows the general crux of the Neoliberal Turn but is more shaped by our contemporary face of racial contestation and our evolved "culture wars" (Hunter 2019). Our political landscape today is still defined by a Republican party which has welded racial despotism with conservative logic, but the colorblind mantra has somewhat given way in the face of new racial resentment and white populism in pursuit of upholding racial and patriarchal hierarchies. Research into the factors behind the 2016 election show that status threat and racial attitudes were key to mobilizing support for Trump, and that backlash towards our nation's changing racial landscape is an important part of contemporary white racial backlash and political organization.

Mainstream diversity discourse has been studied by sociologists and others for its relationship to racial hierarchy in the USA, and critical race theorists have shown that this ostensibly anti-racist discourse can actually uphold racial hierarchy. While some authors have put forward theories about "diversity" discourse, mine stands apart from those such as Berrey (2015) and Mayorga-Gallo (2019) by considering peripheral direction outside of what we know as the mainstream diversity discourse. Within potential directions for new study in this topic, the most pressing is the study of how contemporary diversity discourse is experiencing *rearticulation*. Some of these are active attempts by members of the political Right to continue their historical pursuit of racial despotism and the protection of general social hierarchy in the USA. But, others represent a signal towards more equitable understandings of diversity and difference in society, albeit we do not know if that necessarily creates actual change. Thus, there is work to be done; we must find ways to combat dangerous far-Right rearticulations while also fostering more

progressive, equity-oriented rearticulations of diversity-discourse in ways that actually redress institutional and material inequalities. .

In sum, this chapter has several main takeways. The evolution of "diversity" was shaped by racial contestation and a shifting political landscape in from the Civil Rights era to today; this historical period not only shaped the meanings and discourses associated with "diversity," but the foundational material and cultural arrangements of our society. The clash between differing racial projects involved in the post-Civil Rights moment led to a series of antagonisms and articulations which eventually led "diversity" became an important part of our contemporary episteme. The logics and practices associated with diversity discourse today are important not only to how policies in hiring and admissions address racial difference, but also for how such policies and cultural beliefs address other forms of difference and marginalization. But, while this term is an important concept for policies related to gender and other marginalized identities, and while this term can have a generally vague and hyper-inclusive mantle which includes many forms of social difference, "diversity" has been fundamentally shaped by racial contestation and racial inequality in the USA. This is reminiscent of how the Civil Rights movement—a primarily race-focused moment—provided the blueprint for how our society addresses other inequalities, particularly issues of sexism and homophobia. Thus, from an intersectional perspective, my emphasis on diversity as a "racialized keyword" should not be interpreted as a minimization of attention to a prevailing patriarchal hierarchy. From a genealogical perspective, diversity discourse is racialized, but understanding and critiquing the shortcomings of such discourse is important for the pursuit of equality along *many* dimensions.

Second, my conceptualization of diversity as a "racialized keyword" is best suited to understanding the new directions and rearticulations which are on the horizon. Sociological scholarship has thoroughly unpacked mainstream diversity discourse as we know it, theorizing this discourse as working within colorblind racial ideology or as a potential racial ideology of its own. But, most of this work has focused on the tenets of a particular taken-for-granted form of "diversity discourse," that which has been validated by mainstream culture, institutional practices, and the racial State via legislation and Supreme Court cases. The new directions I described above share some similar meanings and conceptual logics as mainstream diversity discourse, but they are quite different in their own ways. I myself am not intellectually convinced to wholly and only endorse how Berrey (2015) approaches diversity as a discourse versus how Mayorga-Gallo (2019) thinks about diversity as an ideology. Both of these theories conceptualize "diversity" and related discourse too narrowly, focusing only on what I conceive here as mainstream diversity discourse. By contrast, my perspective of diversity as a *racialized keyword* is well-suited to studying mainstream diversity discourse and also being attuned to rearticulations that shift diversity away from the mainstream, such as "diversity of thought" in pursuit of conservative political agendas and/or "diversity and inclusion" as a reflection of a more-progressive rhetoric.

Overall, I hope this chapter makes one thing clear: diversity discourse has evolved, and is still evolving, in the context of racial contestation and the political-ideological "culture wars" in the USA. This history has shaped the rise of "diversity" as a racialized and important keyword in our society. While this word could have just been some unimportant lexical entity which simply existed as a synonym for "variety" or

"heterogeneity," it instead has become a seminal buzzword and nodal point in our society. In the future, in addition to considering how evolutions of diversity discourse relate to areas of traditional relevancy (such as equity policy or the media), we must consider new directions. This includes how social conversation about the majority-minority narrative could both be relevant to mainstream diversity discourse and represent a potential new series of *articulations, antagonisms,* and new discourses associated with "diversity." This chapter has also considered rearticulations of "diversity," such as more progressive versions that include terms such as "equity" and "inclusion." This is a newer frontier for articulations, antagonisms, and *signifying chains* that diverge from mainstream diversity discourse. Fostering these new rearticulations is important, but there are other rearticulations which we must face and challenge. Of the new directions on our horizon, it most imperative that we recognize how the far-Right and agents of racial despotism are hijacking and rearticulating "diversity" in ways that actively maintain white supremacy, patriarchy, and other social hierarchies in the USA.

Diversity Attitudes in the USA

Introduction

This chapter contributes to sociological understandings of diversity discourse and the implications of "diversity" discourse by exploring nationally representative survey data about diversity attitudes. In general social science about race in the USA, scholars studying race-related cultural beliefs, and discourse have often used survey data to highlight major trends and important shifts in overarching racial discourse, racial ideologies, and cultural norms surrounding race-related topics. Having worked with the BAM items for a while, I wish to similarly explore the functions and implications of "diversity" as a racialized keyword in the American imagination. I illustrate that findings from the BAM dataset fall in line with and confirm expectations about mainstream diversity discourse, and I consider broader implications of attitudes about "diversity" in the context of racial contestation and the culture wars. In this chapter, I reference two papers that I first-authored (at the time of this draft, one is in press and the other has received an RnR). These have come out of my years as an RA on the American Mosaic Project, and while all the mathematical calculations below are unique to this paper, my papers and this chapter have overlaps in their analytic logic and takeaways. The BAM dataset is a nationally representative dataset from 2014, and I present findings from this data to illustrate how everyday Americans think about "diversity." In general social science about race in the USA, scholars studying cultural beliefs, discourses, and ideologies related to racial contestation have often used survey data to highlight major

trends and important shifts in overarching racial discourse, racial ideologies, and cultural norms surrounding race-related topics.

Based mostly on unpacking descriptive statistics, associations, factor analysis, and regression results, this chapter analyzes diversity attitudes in the American imagination; findings assess key patterns and associations related to several core items that ask about the keyword "diversity;" This analyzes furthers the main goal of this project: understanding how diversity discourse in the USA is implicated in a complicated social process of interwoven racial contestation and political ideology during our current moment. As I mentioned, having worked with the BAM for several years, there are a large number of findings and analyses I wish to share, more so than I could theoretically squeeze into a journal paper. But, the general crux and logic of this chapter does overlap with my two previous papers (Rajasekar, Aguilar-Champeau and Hartmann, R-n-R at an ASA section journal; Rajasekar, Stewart, and Gerteis, in press at *Social Currents*). Overall, this chapter shows attitudes about "diversity" represent a distinct and well-received, albeit poorly-defined, concept in the American imagination. Furthermore, "diversity" is interwoven in America's racial contestation, political landscape, and culture wars.

This chapter's findings are broken into four subsections. First, I present findings related to several core items in the BAM dataset that explicitly ask participants about "diversity" in a variety of ways. This is to establish key patterns within American's diversity attitudes, with emphasis on how Americans think about the keyword "diversity" itself; this section also presents tests for coherence among responses to these core items. Second, I highlight that Americans' attitudes about the keyword diversity are distinct

from several similar but related items that could confound such attitudes. Through a series of factor analyses, I establish that diversity is a distinct concept in the American imagination, not just a proxy or signal for other race-related topics. Third, I turn to exploring whether diversity attitudes relate to how Americans define the concept of "diversity," given this keyword's flexible and vague nature. I find that while some patterns exist in how Americans define diversity, their definitions generally don't seem to hold much predictive weight for how their attitudes towards the concept. Fourth and finally, I explore how diversity attitudes relate to other racial attitudes and attitudes about policy which relates to racial contestation in the USA. This highlights how diversity attitudes function in the context of political and ideological landscape in America's contemporary culture wars.

Across the various subsections, political ideology is an important and defining fulcrum in American diversity discourse; this is evidenced by how conservatives are less favorable towards "diversity" in general, as evidenced by regression coefficients. That's not the whole story, however; though conservatives' diversity attitudes are less favorable on average, their diversity attitudes are still fairly positive, especially in comparison to their other race-related attitudes such as prejudice and colorblind racism. Nevertheless, even though many highly conservative Americans express favorable attitudes about diversity, they are still more likely to express race-related and policy-related attitudes that fall in line with standard conservative beliefs. This corroborates my genealogical analysis of how the political-ideological dimensions of the culture wars shaped formation of diversity discourse and our general social world today. Additionally, these finding about

political ideology are of particular importance to contextualizing my analysis of diversity discourse in popular news media across the political spectrum in the next chapter.

Research Design

As described in my methods section, the BAM dataset is a nationally representative dataset fielded in 2014, with 2521 respondents. The sample has a slight over-representation of black and Hispanic respondents, an intentional strategy by members of the American Mosaic Project to ensure the data had a strong representation of the views of minority and POC respondents. In all analyses below, however, I use sampling weights which adjust for the oversampling, meaning my findings all reflect the actual racial composition of the USA (based on 2010 Census benchmarks and FIPS information).

Within the analysis, I discuss quite a few different survey items. The work in this chapter reflects being a member of the AMP project for several years, and I therefore draw on many items which I know to be useful and relevant to this analysis. At times, some of the variables in tables and figures come directly from one item, but there are other instances where variables in the analysis are composite indexes, a combination of several different but related items. Below, I present a brief description of the various items, listed and sorted by their thematic relevance. In the various analyses, I used listwise deletion to deal with missing data, most of which came from non-response to attitudinal measures, which led me to avoid imputation. Overall, I found that there were no patterns or systematic issues with the missing data, which I have ascertained over the process of this chapter and my other AMP work.

Key Diversity Items

There are seven core items that directly discuss "diversity" in BAM dataset. Throughout this chapter, I analyze patterns and associations in these core items so as to learn more about how different Americans think about these concepts. During the chapter, I also combine some of these items into a composite measure that represents a more holistic understanding of the latent factor which drives responses to the core items, a presumable measure of diversity attitudes in the American imagination. All the items below are coded so that favorability, agreement, and positive endorsement towards the item are represented with higher values.

The first item, dubbed *Value Racial Diversity* in the chapter, comes from a multi-faceted question which begins, "Here is a list of things that people may think are important in the United States. Please indicate how important YOU think each of these is;" one of the following statements asks of it is important that "We value racial diversity." This item has four responses: "very important," "somewhat important," "not very important," and "not at all."

Another item reads, "The United States is one of the most socially and culturally diverse nations in the world. Do you see this as mostly a strength, mostly a weakness, or equally a strength and a weakness?" with five responses: "mostly a strength," "somewhat a strength," "equally a strength and a weakness," "somewhat a weakness," and "mostly a weakness." This is referred to as *Diversity Strength* in the chapter.

The third lists nine statements about "diversity" and asks participants which describes their understanding of the keyword; I transform this into a four-level measure.

A score of 3 represents those who selected "it makes life more interesting," "it helps us learn tolerance," "it makes us who we are as a nation," "or "it brings different perspectives, which helps us to solve problems." A score of 2 represents those who selected, "Something else." The second-lowest score, a score of 1, represents those who selected "it can lead to intolerance" and "it can create division and conflict. A score of 0 represents those who selected "it can be difficult or disorienting to deal with diversity" or "it can make difficult for us to get things done." In one of the previous papers with colleagues, I lumped the two lower categories into one, but this split here reflects more attention to differentiating those who selected a liability or side-effect of "diversity" versus those who selected a more negative understanding of the direct impacts of "diversity." To check the validity of this recode, I provided crosstabs that highlight that the consistency in responses to other diversity items and participants' sorting into one of the four categories of this item; those who are favorable to the other diversity items are favorable to this one, and vice-versa. This item is referred as *Diversity Statements* the paper.

There are four remaining items that deal with diversity, all of which the same similar series of responses: four options of Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Somewhat Agree, and Strongly Agree. *Teach Religious Diversity* asks if, "Public schools should teach about the religious diversity of the American people." Similarly, *Teach Racial Diversity* asks if, "Public schools should teach about the racial diversity of the American people." *Diverse Town* asks participants how much they agree that "There IS a lot of social and cultural diversity in my city or town," and *Diverse Friends* asks how much participants agree that "There IS a lot of social and cultural diversity among my friends."

At one point in the analysis, based on the coherence and one-factor-solution that loads onto four of these items, I used predicted factor scores as a composite measure of attitudes about "diversity;" these factor scores are referred to as *Diversity Attitudes* and act as a key variable within later stages of the analysis. Finally, apart from these seven core items that ask for attitudes about a diversity-related question, there is *Diversity Definitions*, which asks participants how they define the concept of diversity itself. There were four possible responses categories: "Differences in race and ethnicity," "Differences of all kinds, including religion, race, gender, and sexuality," Those who are disadvantaged by their background," and "Not Sure." At one point in the analysis, I create four binary measures that represent a transformation of this item; each of puts one of the four responses as "Yes" (=1) and lumps the other three into "No" (=0).

Demographics, Political Opinion, and County-Level Indicators

I consider several demographic items in this analysis. First, there is participant *Race*, analyzed as a factor item via dummy codes for White non-Hispanic (the referent group), Black non-Hispanic, Hispanic, Other, or 2+ Races. . I use binary measures for *Gender* (*man*=1) and *Sexuality* (measured as 1=LGBTQ). I use categorical measures for *Education* (higher scores represent more education) and *Income* (higher scores represent more income). Then, I measure political attitudes based on a 7 part scale that puts extreme liberals and extreme conservatives at the edge and moderates at the center of the scale. Based respondents' county characteristics derived from FIPS and ACS benchmarks, which were retroactively added to the BAM measures, I provide standardized measures of respondents' county population, the county median income, and the proportion of non-white residents in respondents' counties.

Attitudinal Measures

There are several other attitudinal measures to discuss, and a large portion of these make multiple appearances in the findings below. Broadly speaking, these measures all are relevant to racial contestation and related beliefs within the USA. From there, several of these fall into relevant clusters based on their thematic and topic similarity. I describe these below based on the organization of the findings themselves; the items are presented in sub-clusters based on their topical relevance and how they are used in the analysis.

A series of items in the BAM measures prejudice, rooted in the general perspective of theories such as "symbolic racism" (Sears and Henry 2003) and "racial resentment" (Kinder and Sanders 1990) by measuring perceptions about certain groups' behavior, cultural values, and work ethic in the USA, rather than explicitly testing for the tenets of classical racism. The introduction reads, "Here is a list of potential problems in American society. For each problem, please mark all of the groups that contribute to the problem." The list of problems reads, "They are a threat to order and public safety," "They don't share my morals or values," "They take jobs and resources that should go to others, "They are dependent on welfare and government assistance," "They are intolerant of others," "They want to take over our political institutions," and "They don't contribute to my community." In Part II, I present factor analysis based on summing each participant's responses towards these items regarding African-Americans, Hispanics, Asians-Americans, Muslims, and Jews. In Parts III and IV, I make a standardized index from these responses, leading to *Prejudicial Attitudes Index* (standardized interitem correlation = 0.539 and standardized Cronbach's alpha = 0.854).

There are three items relevant to measuring color-blind racism and the tenets of post-racial ideology (Bonilla-Silva 2003; Burke 2017). Each is measured with four response categories: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, and Strongly Agree. The first item asks if "race no longer matters" in the USA. The second asks if "racism is or will soon be a thing of the past." The third asks for agreement with the statement, "For the most part, I'm colorblind, that is, I don't see race." In Part II, these items are used in factor analysis as individual measures. Later, in Parts III and IV, I create a standardized index from these three, leading to *Colorblind Racial Attitudes* (standardized interitem correlation = .400 and standardized Cronbach's alpha = 0.667).

I consider four items that measure attitudes towards immigrants and immigration First, "recent immigrants" are another group listed in the series of items described above; we create another reverse-coded item wherein lower scores reflect negativity towards recent immigrants. Then, second asks if "the U.S. should do more to limit immigration." Responses are measured on a four point scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree). The third item reads, "People fleeing persecution in other countries should have the opportunity to seek refuge and come live in the United States" with four response ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The fourth item related to immigration asks about funding for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) with three responses: "fully fund," "fund at reduced levels," and "not fund at all."All items were coded so that higher scores reflect greater acceptance and permissiveness towards immigration. These four items are analyzed as distinct entities in Part II factor analyses, and the combined into a standardized index of *Immigration Attitude* (standardized interitem correlation = 0.286 and standardized Cronbach's alpha = 0.616).

I analyze three measures that have to do with attitudes about affirmative action and anti-discrimination law. The first item asks about "affirmative action in colleges" with three response categories; those who support this policy are coded 2, those who report no opinion are coded 1, and those who oppose the policy are coded 0; in the original item, the supporters selected a response that either justified such policy based on expanding access to education or for facilitating diversity. Then, a similar measure with the same original responses and coding scheme asks about the enforcement of "anti-discrimination law in the workplace." The third measure asks if "Preferential treatment for racial minorities violates the principle of equal opportunity," with four responses ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. In Part IV, I make an index of these items for *Affirmative Action Attitudes* (standardized interitem correlation = 0.243 and standardized Cronbach's alpha = 0.491)

I consider policy attitudes towards items that specifically mention policy meant to help African-Americans. All three of these items have the same four-part response scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. The first asks if "African-Americans should receive special consideration in job hiring and school admissions," the second asks if "African Americans should get economic assistance from the government," and the third asks if "Charities and other non-profit organizations should do more to help African Americans." In Part IV, I present a standardized index of these items, leading to *Black-Assistance-Policy* attitudes (standardized interitem correlation = 0.509 and standardized Cronbach's alpha = 0.846).

Analytic Logic and Findings Structure

The BAM is a nationally representative dataset, and all findings presented below are weighted so that the data matches the actual population of the USA. Apart from descriptive statistics and related figures, most of the analyses are either based on regression or factor analysis. Depending on the dependent variable, I use logistic, ordered-logistic, and linear regression. In all regression analyses, I present results based on robust standard errors to account for heteroskedacity. I checked for issues of colinearity among predictor items in the various regressions, finding no issues of notes. All factor analyses were conducted upon polychorric correlation matrixes of the relevant items, as many were non-normally distributed and had a relatively low number of response categories. All the factor analyses were conducted through iterated principle axis factor analysis, and I present rotated factor loadings from oblimin rotations to account for the likelihood of some level of correlation among the different attitudinal measures in the various calculations. I also present results from Bartlett's test of sphericity and KMO for the variables in the different factor analyses, finding that they all met minimum necessary requirements to be amenable to factor analysis.

Part I presents general distributions and basic regressions that explore seven core items about diversity. As was a general takeaway in my earlier papers, the patterns in the nationally-representative BAM validate two points-of-consensus in existing literature: Americans are positive towards diversity and they define in it very inclusive ways. This section also tests the coherence of these different items about "diversity" through exploratory factor analyses. Based on the logic of "racialized keywords," there should be some level of coherence among these items, despite their wide variety of differences in writing, framing, and response categories. That said, observing even high levels of

coherence doesn't necessarily validate the theory in an ironclad sense. But, if there is no coherence at all, that would suggest the theory is fairly poor, illustrating that diversity attitudes and related discourse in the USA don't cohere around the lexical entity "diversity" itself whatsoever.

Part II shares a similar logic with parts of Paper 1 {Rajasekar, Matthew Doug}, albeit the paper doesn't draw on the theoretical frameworks I've put forward in this dissertation (and the statistical calculations are not identical). The overall goal is to ascertain whether Americans recognize "diversity" in survey items as a distinct cultural concept, or whether they see this keyword simply and solely as a proxy for other concepts. Based in the items available in the BAM and my genealogical analysis of diversity discourse as related to racial contestation in the USA, Part II presents factor analyses to test whether "diversity" attitudes are distinct from possible confounding nexuses of attitudes. The procedure was to assemble thematically-similar items relevant to particular topic domains or ideas that intersect with "diversity" and first test the coherence of these other items; I performed exploratory factor analyses on the various sets of potential confounders, finding that all the items tested against "diversity" themselves exhibit internal coherence as items that tap into attitudes about a similar concept.

In Part II, I present the eigenvalues of testing diversity items against items which were thusly validated. If diversity items and the other items are well predicted by a single latent factor and thusly exhibit coherence, then we can presume that diversity attitudes are not distinct from the other topic domain being tested. But, if we consistently reveal two-factor solutions, this would suggest that diversity attitudes are indeed distinct from

the other topic-domains being tested, albeit that doesn't necessarily mean they're not related at all. But, the factor analyses all underwent oblimin rotations for account for the possibility of a separate-yet-related relationship between diversity attitudes and the other nexuses described below; I examined the rotated loadings and found that one factor would consistently load onto key diversity items and the other factor would load onto the items in the analysis.

Part II thusly tests how diversity attitudes compare against four sets of other attitudes that could potentially confound or override "diversity" in the American imagination: prejudicial attitudes, colorblind-racial attitudes, immigration attitudes, and attitudes towards multiculturalism and pluralism. First, there is the possibility that "diversity" simply signals attention to social difference and minority groups; essentially, Americans' responses to the core diversity items in the BAM may just be reflections of their attitudes about particular groups; as "diversity" language can sometimes be conflated with a changing nation and the majority-minority narrative (Craig and Richeson 2014; Frey 2018; Alba 2019), this could prove relevant given how prejudicial attitudes and symbolic, coded language can be relevant when participants in other research have expressed misgivings about "diversity" and a changing American population (Danbold and Huo 2015; Craig, Rucker, and Richeson 2018a, 2018b). Therefore, I test for coherence between diversity attitudes and prejudicial attitudes. Second, many authors have discussed how mainstream diversity discourse in the USA can reify post-racial beliefs and function as an extension of colorblind racial attitudes, particularly when diversity proves a weak rationale for equity-policy or works as a language of ignoring racial inequality (Herring and Henderson 2011; Berrey 2015; Petts 2020). Therefore, I

test how diversity attitudes compare to colorblind racial attitudes. Finally, in order to more fully consider the interconnections of "diversity" language and attention to social-demographic change today, I also test how diversity attitudes relate to immigration, as immigration attitudes have also proven relevant to how people perceive and react to social change in the USA (Danbold and Huo 2015; Mutz 2018; Myers and Levy 2018). Relatedly, I consider the potential connection between "diversity" and survey items that have to do with the tents of multiculturalism and generally celebrating group-membership and pluralism (Hartmann and Gerteis 2005; Kivisto 2012; Hartmann 2015).

Part III focuses more so on the concept of "diversity" itself, after Part I and Part II establish that diversity attitudes are indeed distinct in the American mind. Based on using predicted factor scores as a measure of "diversity attitudes" in the American mind, I explore how demographics and political opinion predict such attitudes. Then, I delve more deeply into how Americans define the concept of diversity. First, I use regressions to test who is more likely to define it in a different way, and then whether diversity definitions themselves are greatly related to diversity attitudes. This section thusly explores the definitional flexibility, vagueness, and hyper-inclusive nature of "diversity", which I posit is the root of all critiques associated with mainstream diversity discourse.

Finally, Part IV analyzes diversity attitudes in action, based on predicted factor scores. In this section, based on indexing several of the items that made earlier appearances, I consider how diversity attitudes relate to racial attitudes and race-related policy topics. First, I test the relationships between "diversity" and prejudicial attitudes; I also test colorblind racial attitudes. The findings here further illustrate that diversity attitudes are their own animal; they're not just proxies for prejudice or colorblind racism.

Second, I test how "diversity" attitudes predict attitudes about immigration, affirmative action policy, and policy specifically designed to assist African-Americans. In this section, I also consider interactions between diversity attitudes and diversity discourse, with the goal of illustrating whether positive diversity discourse or one's inner political ideology proves more relevant to their racial and policy attitudes.

I now present findings, based on narrating the key mathematical results and statistical interpretation of the various tables and figures below. In my conclusion section, I discuss the substantive conclusions of the findings without relying too heavily on mathematical specifics.

Findings

PI: Seven Items about "Diversity"

Table 1 here

Table 1a here

Table 1b here

Table 2 here

Table 1 displays the response percentages for the seven items which have the keyword "diversity;" the table is arranged so that 1 represents low agreement or favorability towards the item and 4 or 5 represents the highest agreement of favorability, depending on how many response categories the item in question has. As described earlier, *Diversity-Statements* is a transformation of the original variable; see Table 1a for the original distribution, which has nine categories transformed into four for the

calculations in the paper. Table 1b displays the summary statistics for responses to the seven items. Figure 2 presents these items' distributions as concurrent line-graphs; note that *American-Diversity* has been transformed into two options so as to fit the other items' four-part scale. One transformation combines the two most positive responses into one category; the second transformation combines the two most negative responses into one category. Finally, Table 2 presents ordered-logistic-regression results of predicting favorability and/or agreement to the seven diversity items based on basic demographics (race, gender, sexuality, education, and income), political attitudes (coded so higher values reflect greater liberalism in this table), and respondents' county characteristics. Thus, while some predictors are significant in some of the models, none of them are consistently impactful across the various regressions. Additionally, the pseudo-R^2 scores are quite low. Finally, but very importantly, racial identity has little to no impact in all the models. This is important for establishing and illustrating that diversity attitudes and related discourse in the USA are not a white phenomenon or a POC phenomenon; diversity discourse seems to be understood similarly across Americans of all racial backgrounds.

Together, these tables and figures illustrate that Americans are fairly positive when asked to evaluate the word "diversity" in the abstract, such as when it is framed in terms of something to value or as an asset to our nation. But, they don't blindly answer positively to anything and everything which has to do with "diversity." Answers towards the two items regarding teaching about diversity are not quite as positive as first three. More markedly, the responses to *Diverse Town* and *Diversity in Social Circle* take on a noticeably different distribution shape than the other items; rather than generally high

agreement, these distributions have a more normal shape. And, the regressions show that responses to *Diverse Town* and *Diverse Friends* are not predicted by the same variables, such as political ideology, which seem to matter for the other items. By contrast, county-level context, which was relatively unimportant in the earlier models, proves relevant to predicting *Diverse Town* and *Diverse* Friends. In my paper with Stewart and Gerteis, we find that Americans are fairly attentive to their local context and surrounding environment. We also find that responses towards *Diverse Town* are not well-predicted by some of the measures having to do with valuing or defining "diversity." These findings, plus more below, generally corroborate the takeaway that among the seven items discussed here, *Diverse Town* and *Diverse Friends* do not cohere as well with the others.

Table 3 here

Table 4 here

Table 5 here

Table 3 presents a polychorric correlation matrix of the seven items, which further highlights that *DivTown* and *DivFriends* are similar to each other, but quite distinct from the other items in the matrix. Most compelling is the series of factor analyses I conducted upon the seven items to explore their coherence. Table 4 presents results from a seven-factor solution, and Table 5 presents results from a final four-item solution I found to be the most coherent. This is in line with my other paper with Aguilar-Champeau and Hartmann. Though that paper didn't draw on the theoretical framework here, and its calculations were slightly different, it also established a similar empirical finding as the

tables here. Diversity items exhibit some level of coherence, as a single latent factor loads onto four different items that have to do with diversity. But, since a two-factor solution was revealed for the factor analysis of all seven items, we see that the coherence of "diversity" has its limits. Americans don't follow it with blind zeal and gusto; those items that cohere have more logical and topical overlap than those that don't, such as *DivTown* and *DivFriends*. Supplementary findings showed that *Religious Diversity* was also not well predicted by the same latent factor as the other four, so I decided to focus on these four that do cohere as presented in Table 5.

PII: "Diversity" as a Distinct Concept

Table 6

In my paper with Aguilar-Champeau and Hartmann, we conducted a series of factor analyses similar to those presented here, although the calculations are not exactly alike between the paper and this project. The four tables each address the possibility that diversity is confounded by other possible attitudes, which would suggest that rather than recognizing it as its own concept and keyword, Americans see "diversity" as a proxy for something else. The paper shares a similar logic to Table 6 regarding diversity versus immigration attitudes, prejudicial attitudes, and colorblind racial attitudes; note that, fully unique to this project, the table also considers diversity versus multicultural attitudes.

Together, these tables consistently reveal a two-factor solution; the eigenvalues and explained variance suggest a two factor solution. I examined the factor rotations which further illustrate the two-factor solution, as one factor consistently loads onto diversity attitudes while the other loads onto the other items being tested. Thus, "diversity" is

distinct from attitudes towards these other concepts, proven by the fact that attitudes towards diversity and the possible confounder items weren't well-predicted by a single latent factor. We see that "diversity" isn't simply reduced to a proxy for prejudice, colorblind racial attitudes, immigration, or multiculturalism. "Diversity," it seems, is its own entity in the American mind.

PIII: Digging into "Diversity:" Attitudes and Definitions

Figure 3 here

Table 7 here

Table 7a here

Table 7b here

Figure 4 here

Figure 5 here

The rest of this analysis uses predicted factor scores based off the four-item analysis in Table 5 as a measure of attitudes towards "Diversity," allowing analysis of a more complete picture of how such attitudes function in action. The summary statistics and histogram in Figure 3 shows that American's diversity attitudes are fairly positive, in line with the discussion in the genealogy chapter and the distributions of the original items in Table 2. Then, the regression results in Table 7 regarding the predicted factor scores for diversity attitudes are comparable to the results in Table 2 above, which examined the individual diversity items separately. This lends credence to the predicted factor scores as an accurate, substantively-useful measure of diversity attitudes in the American imagination. When we test how demographic factors predict diversity attitudes, we see that racial identity is relatively unimportant (supplemental ANOVA results). We

also see that education and political attitudes prove significant predictors of diversity attitudes; Americans with higher education and lower conservatism are more likely to have higher diversity attitudes.

But, the box and whisker plots in Figures 4 and 5 show that there is more to the story. By and large, Americans with higher and lower education display fairly positive attitudes towards the concept of diversity. This pattern is similar for Americans with different political ideologies. While the most liberal Americans are more positive about diversity than the most conservative Americans, which drives the significant regression coefficient, the box-and-whisker plot shows that even the most conservative Americans' average diversity attitudes are fairly positive. This is an important dimension that my previous papers haven't expanded on: conservatives' diversity attitudes are a little lower, but they're not necessarily "low."

Table 8

Table 9

As described earlier, attitudes towards "diversity" may be common, but definitions of diversity can be wildly variable and inclusive of many forms of difference. Earlier, Figure 1 presents the complete distribution to responses towards an item asking for definitions of diversity. As mentioned earlier, about 75% of respondents chose the most inclusive definition of diversity available. In Table 8, I present results from logistic regressions predicting each particular response as a binary measure (yes=1), with the other three lumped into the 0-category. This allows for examination of key features among the different groups who selected different responses. Note that for the "disadvantage" answer, the sample size is so small these results shouldn't be taken with

too much emphasis. Second major findings stand out in general. First, race does seem to matter across the four binary regressions, at least more than it does for diversity attitudes. In essence, while Americans of different racial identities have similar attitudes and favorability about "diversity," Americans of different racial identities don't define "diversity" as similarly. Second, political attitudes matter; conservative Americans are more likely to define "diversity" as ethnoracial difference and less likely to define diversity in a hyper-inclusive manner.

In Table 9, I present regressions that predict diversity attitudes based on the demographics and the various binary diversity definitions. Notably, those with an inclusive definition of diversity are more likely to have positive diversity attitudes, but note that the R^2 of the various models with definitions included is barely improved from the base model of demographics alone. In essence, not only are diversity definitions fairly inclusive, but such definitions generally seem fairly irrelevant for Americans' attitudes about favorability towards diversity.

PIV: Diversity Attitudes, Racial Attitudes, and Policy Attitudes

Table 10

Figure 6

Figure 7

The tables and figures in this section consider the implications of how diversity attitudes function in relation to other attitudes about race-related topics in the USA. This begins with comparing diversity attitudes to prejudicial and colorblind racial attitudes. Table 10 presents regression results that predict such attitudes based on demographics plus diversity attitudes; I also display results from models that include an interaction term

between conservatism and diversity attitudes. However, the interaction term proves insignificant in each model, and the R^2 is barely improved by the adding the interaction term. The table shows that diversity attitudes negatively predict prejudice and positively predict colorblind racial attitudes, and the significance is fairly strong. These patterns make intuitive sense; Americans who have favorable attitudes towards diversity are less likely to hold prejudiced views and more likely to agree with post-racial messages. To further explore how diversity attitudes compare to prejudicial attitudes and colorblind racial attitudes, Figure 6 presents histograms of the three measures. We see that prejudicial attitudes have a very pronounced right-skew; most Americans express low levels of prejudice. Then, diversity attitudes have a very pronounced left-skew; most Americans have high favorability towards diversity. Finally, colorblind racial attitudes have a fairly normal-shaped distribution; a majority of Americans' colorblind racial attitudes are clustered in the center at a moderate level, neither high nor low. This lends more credence to the idea that diversity attitudes are distinct, not just a simple proxy for social difference or a stand-in for post-racial ideology.

In Figure 7, I present box plots of diversity, prejudicial, and colorblind racial-attitudes over political conservatism; the figure further illustrates that diversity attitudes appear different and distinct than prejudice and colorblind racism. Importantly, though regressions in this chapter establish that higher conservatism predicts lower diversity attitudes, the box-and-whisker plots in Figure 7 highlight this is not a simple case of conservatives hating or disowning diversity. The distribution shows that extreme conservatives have fairly high diversity attitudes which are only slightly lower than extreme liberals' diversity attitudes.

Table 11

Figure 8

Finally, Table 11 presents how diversity attitudes predict attitudes towards policy topics that are relevant to racial contestation and political ideology in the USA; some reference other lexical entities which could be considered racialized keywords, such as "immigration" or "affirmative action." The goal here is to understand how diversity attitudes function in a context of competing policy attitudes, political beliefs, and race-related discourses. The models consider how attitudes towards immigration, affirmative action, and black-specific assistance policy are predicted by demographics, prejudice, colorblind racism, and diversity attitudes. I also present models with an interaction term between conservatism and diversity attitudes. The models consistently show that prejudiced Americans are more likely to oppose these policies, but the behavior of colorblind racism is less consistent in the models, barely proving significant in the immigration model. Then, diversity attitudes significantly and consistently predict favorable views on the policy attitudes. This further illustrates that diversity attitudes are distinct from prejudice and colorblind racial attitudes.

Conservative political attitudes prove a strong negative predictor of all three policy items. But, while diversity attitudes still prove significant in models with the interaction term, the significance of conservatism decreases. Furthermore, the coefficient is negative, as were the coefficients for conservatism in the previous models. This illustrates that conservatives who have high diversity attitudes still oppose these policies. Essentially, while the above findings established that many conservatives express positive diversity attitudes, holding positive diversity attitudes doesn't lead conservatives

to suddenly adopt liberal policy platforms. Figure 8 explores this pattern, providing three scatterplots and line-fits of the policy attitudes over the product of conservatism and diversity attitudes. This shows that, generally speaking, people who have high conservatism and high diversity attitudes are more likely have negative policy views; the fit-line has a negative slope in all three plots. Figure 8 further highlights that even though many conservatives have fairly favorable diversity attitudes, this doesn't necessarily motivate support for these policies; their conservatism still seems define their racial policy attitudes.

Discussion

This chapter has analyzed nationally representative survey data to explore "diversity" in the American imagination. Split into four parts, the analyses are based upon several core items that use the word "diversity" yet frame and approach the concept in a variety of ways; the chapter has also accounted for how Americans define this term. Informed by my theory of racialized keywords and the themes in the genealogical chapter, this chapter studies the coherence, patterns, and implications of Americans' attitudes towards "diversity." The four findings sections each contribute a set of findings which overall shows that attitudes and beliefs about diversity represent a distinct and, well-received concept in the American imagination. Yet, this concept is still poorly-defined, and such definitions seem to matter little to American' diversity attitudes. In general, "diversity" is interwoven in America's racial contestation, political landscape, and culture wars, evidenced by how diversity attitudes relate to political ideology, racial attitudes, and race-related policy attitudes.

Part I presented eight items that ask about diversity; seven of these asked for agreement or favorability about diversity, and one measures how Americans define this term. As we would expect based on the literature, two patterns are clear from these distributions: Americans are fairly positive in their evaluations of diversity, and Americans define diversity in a hyper-inclusive manner. Factor analysis shows the most coherence among *Value Racial Diversity, Diversity Strength, Diversity Statements,* and *Teach Racial Diversity*. A closer look does show that not all the diversity items are universally lauded. Response distributions, factor analysis, and regressions in this section show that responses to *Diverse Town* and *Diverse Friends* are fairly different than the other items about diversity, which ask for evaluations of the concept in the abstract rather than applying it to one's locale or friend group. This isn't necessarily shocking, but it is worth nothing that Americans don't blindly state that their community or social circle is diverse; general favorability towards the concept doesn't seem to lead people to have a positive knee-jerk reaction to absolutely everything that has to do with diversity.

Part II, based on a similar logic to another paper of mine, considers that "diversity" in the American mind may not be a distinct concept, but simply something conflated with other race-related topics; "diversity" may just be a proxy. To test this possibility, Part II uses factor analysis to compare diversity to prejudice, colorblind racial attitudes, attitudes about immigration, and attitudes about multicultural-pluralism. If one-factor solutions were to emerge, it would suggest that diversity attitudes are a proxy for these other concepts; two-factor solutions, however, would refute the idea that diversity attitudes are a proxy. The four analyses revealed two-factor solutions, thus validating the

findings in my previous paper and corroborating the idea that diversity is a distinct, unique concept in the American mind.

In Part III, I used predicted factor scores as a measure of Americans' diversity attitudes; the distribution of these factor scores further illustrates that Americans have fairly positive diversity attitudes. First, I tested how basic demographics, political opinion, and county-level characteristics were predictive of diversity attitudes. The full regression model showed that racial identity and county traits were surprisingly irrelevant; supplemental tests verified this. Then, in the full regression, education and conservatism proved important predictors of Americans' diversity attitudes. That said, however, the regression coefficients themselves were a touch misleading. The box-and-whisker plots highlighted that even if some differences exist, most Americans across different levels of education and differing political opinions still hold similarly high diversity attitudes. Low-educated Americans' and extreme conservatives' diversity views may be slightly lower than others, but those views are still fairly positive. Part III also used regression to explore diversity definitions. Here, race proves more relevant, as racial identity was related to how people define this concept. But, the more important takeaway is that diversity definitions did very little to improve model fit and R^2 when they were added to the model predicting diversity attitudes. Essentially, not only are diversity definitions flexible and hyper-inclusive, but they don't really seem to usefully predict how people feel about "diversity" itself.

Finally, Part IV considers diversity attitudes in action, i.e. how diversity attitudes relate to the broader context of racial contestation and the culture wars in the USA. First, we see that diversity attitudes associate with prejudice and with colorblind racism when

we look at the regression coefficients. But, visualizations show that diversity attitudes have a differently-shaped distribution than prejudice and colorblind racism, which would further suggest that "diversity" is its own entity in the American imagination. The final series of analyses tested how diversity attitudes, and an interaction between diversity attitudes and conservatism, predicted attitudes towards immigration, affirmative action, and assistance policy specific to African-Americans. We see that diversity attitudes themselves have a positive association with favorability towards these policy items, but the interaction term coefficients—plus visualizations of the pattern—highlight those who are high in conservatism and high in diversity are more likely to have negative attitudes about the policy items. Essentially, while diversity attitudes prove positive for policy attitudes, they don't override political ideology; even conservatives who have high favorability towards diversity still behave like we'd expect conservatives to when it comes to racialized policy attitudes. Thus, even though extreme conservatives express some positivity towards diversity, such attitudes seem to matter little for motivating a different political platform.

This analysis does have limitations. First, in several instances, the factor analyses are potentially hindered by the survey items in question. Ideally, factor analyses occur over variables with normal distributions and with a large number of possible response categories. The Bartlett's tests in this chapter establish that my factor analyses are mathematically sound, but they would be strengthened if some of the items in questions had more variability, particularly the diversity items which were disproportionately positive. I hope future research, including my own work, can design items more amenable to the methods I've used here so as to corroborate the patterns within my

analyses of the BAM. Another limitation is the lack of measures in the BAM survey which address attitudes surrounding sexism, homophobia, and other forms of marginalization. From an intersectional perspective, they theory of diversity as a racialized keyword would suggest that diversity attitudes have important implications for white supremacy and patriarchy in the contemporary culture wars and political moment. I sincerely hope that future work can address this remaining gap. Finally, but importantly, the BAM survey's oversampling ensures representation of Black and Hispanic POC, but the sample's representation of other minority ethnoracial groups is fairly small. Future research should more deeply study the differences and patterns among how Americans from different ethnoracial backgrounds think about diversity, particularly those from groups not represented here.

Despite its imitations, this chapter has established important empirical patterns in Americans' attitudes and beliefs about diversity; the findings also work with the context of this project's overarching themes and takeaways. Some of these are directly relevant to developing the sociological literature. First, we see that diversity attitudes are positive, and that diversity definitions are variable; the findings also suggest that even though diversity definitions and attitudes seem relatively unrelated, Americans diversity attitudes do express some level of coherence. From the theoretical perspective of racialized keywords, the findings don't necessarily prove the entire theory, but they do illustrate that the theory's not wholly wrong. Second, we see that while racial identity and local context don't seem to greatly matter for diversity attitudes, political ideology is a consistent predictor of such attitudes across the various analyses. Existing sociological research, often based on interview methods or ethnographic observation, has focused on

race and place as key dimensions of diversity discourse; the findings here suggest that future research should do more to consider how education and politics also represent such dimensions, potentially more important to variation in diversity attitudes. Third, though this project would content that the "diversity ideology" theory is imperfect because it focuses too much on mainstream understandings of diversity, my findings do suggest that Mayorga-Gallo (2019) and others are correct in one aspect: "diversity" is not simply an extension of other logics, discourses, or concepts. At a minimum, the findings here establish that diversity is distinct, particularly from colorblind-racial attitudes. Relationships and associations exist between diversity attitudes and the other attitudes I tested, but they're not the same thing.

As described in the genealogy chapter, political ideology and racial contestation have an important relationship in the USA, one which appears to manifest in diversity attitudes. In comparison to my other papers, the analysis has explored the relationship between diversity discourse and conservatism more thoroughly. I have found that while conservatives are more negative about diversity on average, even extreme conservatives still have fairly positive responses towards diversity. The general favorability towards "diversity" in the American zeitgeist seems to shape how all Americans across the political spectrum think about diversity. Nevertheless, when you boil it down, being pro-diversity doesn't necessarily do much to make conservative Americans suddenly change their minds and abandon existing Republican platforms which have worked to maintain racial despotism and neoliberal governance. Many conservatives have pro-diversity attitudes, but they still express traditional conservative attitudes when it comes to race-related issues and policy, such as holding higher symbolic prejudice and opposing

affirmative action. This finding is important for understanding the content analysis in the following chapter, wherein I explore diversity discourse across the political left and right. Both this chapter and the following highlight that conservatives still endorse the concept of diversity itself, but that such attitudes still coincide with general agendas of racial despotism that have defined conservative politics and social landscape in the USA for decades.

Diversity Discourse in News Media

Introduction

The current chapter uses mixed-methods textual analysis to establish empirical baselines about the keyword diversity and diversity discourse(s) in American media, particularly as relevant to racial contestation and the political-ideological dimensions of the culture wars. The dataset comprises several thousand unique articles published online by six major news sources that range across the political spectrum. For the most part, I selected these sources with the goal of mapping a snapshot of how the keyword "diversity" and diversity discourse is used across American political news media. In order to ensure a representation of a variety of ideologies and normative frameworks, I selected six sources that range across the political spectrum. That said, Americans generally over-estimate political bias in the media and are too quick to assume that our journalism is greatly shaped by politics and ideology. Several authors who study political bias in the news media and/or the readership of several prominent news media organizations have shown that many contemporary news organizations, including some of the sources studied in this chapter, publish surprisingly similar content (Groseclose and Milyo 2005; Groeling 2013; Budak, Goel, and Rao 2016; Lindner & Barnard 2020). In fact, my own findings show that there is plenty of overlap in how the contrasting sources discuss diversity, particularly in the topics that this keyword proves relevant to.

But, even if political differences between journalistic texts can be over-stated, my project's goal is to consider how diversity discourse relates to racial contestation and the political-ideological dimensions of our culture wars. Therefore, I pay particular attention

to the most conservative news source in my data: the far-right, "alt-right" news outlet Breitbart, founded by Steve Bannon, a former Trump advisor and infamous white supremacist. Then, Fox News is the second-most conservative paper in this sample; political bias may be overstated, but scholars generally agree that these sources lean to the Right. Of the remaining sources, I am hesitant to definitively claim that Wall Street Journal, CNN, and New York Times are necessarily liberal or conservative. Of the three, Wall Street Journal has had a more historic tilt to the Right, but even that may not be a firm rule anymore. During the Trump years and the time that the articles were sampled, these three "mainstream media" sources found themselves shifting (or perhaps pushed_ somewhat to the Left, often dependent on whatever the leader of the free world was doing on Twitter. Therefore, I would say that for practical purposes, the political "center" of this sample could include Wall Street Journal, CNN, and New York. But, importantly, Huffington Post occupies a fairly distinct position as the most-Left leaning source in the sample. With this in mind, I believe there is much to be learned by looking closely at the differences between Breitbart and Huffington Post as representations of the most politically divergent examples of diversity discourse in media. For the remainder of this chapter, I shorthand the names of these sources as three letter abbreviations (alphabetically: BRT, CNN, FOX, HFF, NYT, and WSJ).

This sample is effectively a snapshot of a specific and important keyword in mass-media texts, produced by high-profile and high-volume media organizations. By using mixed-methods analysis to study a media sample such as this, sociologists can identify particular phenomena in the usage of a keyword and analyze the broader cultural, political, and ideological implications of the various *articulations, antagonisms,* and

signifying chains associated with a particular keyword. Thus, my purposive sample isn't random and doesn't qualify as a systemic or representative analysis of the news media organizations' content overall, but I provide an informative look at diversity discourse media in political news media. Then, comparing and contrasting key trends in the texts across the different news sources, I further explore how the specifics and caveats of particular contemporary diversity discourse relate to political ideology.

At the current time, news media coverage of certain stories—as well as the media itself—is another battleground upon which racial contestation and the political culture wars take place. From debates about diversity in Hollywood to accusations of "fake news," racial contestation and the culture wars are greatly attuned to media at the current moment. That said, this is not a new phenomenon. Historically, as far back as images of "sambo" and "mammy," American media has played a role in perpetuating racial hierarchies and constructing racism; correspondingly, challenging racist media systems has been important dimension to racial projects that pursue racial equality (Omi and Winant 2015). Several of the authors cited in my genealogical chapter have focused on the role of media images and media organizations in shaping the evolved racism and related policy that followed the Civil Rights era (Gilens 1991; Mendelberg 2001; Gray 2013). Media technology continues to evolve today, but the historical trend of racial contestation in media continues. In the introduction to *Race and Contention in Twenty-First Century US Media*, editors Smith and Thakore (2016) describe how even in the context of new media and digital technologies, racial hierarchies and racial inequalities remain; media institutions, organizations, and material are shaped by and can shape the ongoing social struggles associated with race and racial inequality in the USA.

Therefore, my analysis of diversity discourse in media texts can explore how the language of "diversity" and "multiculturalism" functions in news media today as relevant to racial contestation and the culture wars. In comparison to the general social science literature, I believe there is a gap in such research. Plenty of scholars have studied "diversity in the media" or something to that nature, but that generally entails describing the representation and incorporation of various marginalized identities in media material rather than actually exploring the uses, functions, and implications of diversity discourse itself in the media. Overall, this chapter and the papers that could come from it represent fairly unique research about the keyword "diversity" and diversity discourse. Empirically and theoretically, this chapter analyzes of a dataset that I've personally created, a one-of-a-kind snapshot of diversity discourse as it occurs naturally in political news media. [1] The media selected are culturally salient and represent key points in the political spectrum. Based on empirical summaries and core findings from the dataset, this chapter draws several substantive conclusions about diversity discourse in American political news media. Overall, this analysis sociological literature about diversity discourse by addressing a relative shortage of research that studies the uses, functions, and implications of "diversity" language and related discourse in mass media.

The chapter has three remaining sections. First, I describe the process for acquiring and processing the data in the research design, much of which was a process I imagine most members of my department are not familiar with. As I hope to develop a

[1] From the starting this project to the time of writing this draft, the accessibility and rules associated with acquiring such data have changed, and they continue to do so. It would not shock me if, in a few years, one would not be able to assemble a replication of the current dataset; at a minimum, they would have to be attentive to such issues.

teaching and writing profile related to QCA and CATA methods generally within sociology, I would like to take the time in this dissertation chapter to fully flesh out how I acquired and prepped the data in this analysis. I believe this writing is important both for understanding this chapter's findings and for developing my approach to describing these research methods. Second, I turn to the Findings section, which presents several core findings about the dataset overall. In the findings section, I also write with attention to the process of doing such research and producing the findings; as described above, I appreciate this opportunity to practice the kind of writing and explanation I believe will be a large part of my career as a sociologist who specializes in QCA methods. Thirdly, the discussion section expands on my findings' substantive importance, particularly in the context of my other chapters and project as a whole.

The findings section of this chapter opens with some discussion of descriptive statistics about the dataset and an exploration of the relative infrequent language of "multiculturalism" in the sample. Then, the remainder of the findings section is split into two parts. The first sub-section focuses on topic models about the six sub-corpuses in their entirety, comparing and contrasting prevalent topics across the various sub-corpuses. Such findings can illustrate the social conversations wherein the keyword "diversity" proves pertinent within the news media texts. While some topics are fairly unique to one or two corpuses, the findings show that there are several topics that consistently appear in the six media sources. Then, the second sub-section of the findings sections focuses on identifying and analyzing two smaller sub-samples of the texts as relevant to rearticulations of diversity discourse (i.e. "diversity of thought," "diversity of opinion," and similar phrases versus "diversity and inclusion", "diversity and equity,"

and similar phrases). Based upon quantitative description and qualitative close-reading, I show that while these new phrases and rearticulations are still relatively infrequent, there are clear normative, ideological, and agenda-driven underpinnings to how the rearticulations are used and deployed. This is most obviously evident in how the most ideologically divergent sources (Breitbart and HuffingtonPost) discuss "diversity of thought."

As I describe in the Discussion section, the patterns that emerge in the texts' overall topics (first section of the findings) and their usage of the rearticulation phrases (second section of the findings) show that the keyword "diversity" is entangled in many important, hot-button issues in the current moment that have important implications for racial contestation and other dimensions of the culture wars, such as gender and patriarchy. In this section, I also describe some of the ideas I have for expanding on this research in separate, dedicated papers that relate to parts of the core findings I describe in the chapter.

Research Design

From start to finish, the data identification and acquisition process turned a query of search terms—{"diversity," "diverse," "diversifying," "diversification," "multiculturalism," and "multi-culturalism"}— in a dataset of relevant texts published online by the purposively selected news sources (Breitbart, CNN, FOX, Huffington Post, New York Times, and Wall Street Journal). In this sub-section, I describe this process

with an eye to explaining the nuts and bolts, and the challenges, that go with such methods. [2]

The search strings were submitted to the news aggregator NewsAPI, which compiles and aggregates content from over 30,000 different news organizations worldwide. The database captures full texts and can perform full-text-searches, which helps researchers to pinpoint specific terms' usage in specified news media. The script was designed to periodically search for articles recently posted on one of the seven host domains; this loop ran every few weeks during the time window specified above (see methodological appendix for my proof-of-purchase for NewsAPI services). Through the use of an API for the search terms that was designed to search from the predetermined set of six news sources, the texts were identified; they are all articles or similar pages published in the relevant web domains that contain one or more of the search terms. Once texts were identified, URLs and metadata were compiled so that the text from relevant articles could be downloaded and analyzed; images and videos from the pages were excluded.

Data were extracted from articles by parsing html code and pasting final text into individual, labeled text and docx files; each file's name corresponded to an article URL in the original compilation of webpages from NewsAPI, and the names also included shorthand that indicated a text's original news source. Initial data cleanup steps were removing non-standard characters based on different encodings, removing a small handful of duplicate texts, and removing symbols from the texts. I checked for and

[2] I would like to acknowledge the support from our institution's LATIS staff, particularly Michael Beckstrand, in helping with data identification and collection.

removed duplicate texts, as well as blank or very, very short texts (less than five words); blanks were generally caused by the news API identifying a unique URL with "diversity" or a similar such word in the headline; in some instances, a URL with a promising headline had no textual material of its own, instead being a host for multimodal data such as images, video, or a slideshow.

The most important part of this and many QCA projects is the initial data processing and clean-up, similar to addressing missing data or corrupted records in survey data and archival research. I would say I spent more time on diagnosing and troubleshooting issues in the texts than actually analyzing them. It took me several different scrapes, trials and errors, and diagnostic checks of the data in order to ensure that I had a functional file with the text from each article identified by the API tool. It took several different cleaning procedures and iterations to ensure that the texts were encoded similarly and written with standard English characters. Examples of complications associated with text extraction include removing non-English characters and words, capturing the content of headlines and sub-headlines, and accounting for social media material on the webpages. A long but important part was ensuring that the text in the files only included the substantive text of the article, avoiding banners, advertisements, disclaimers, and other irrelevant text on the webpage. Minute but important frustrations came from inconsistencies in the different webpages' fonts and style, sometimes even within the same news organization (don't get me started on CNN), meaning I had to write several more specialized scripts for small pieces of the corpus than others. I warn others who embark on such research to watch out for small but troublesome things such as inconsistent fonts on characters with a floating dot (various

lowercase “i” and “j” would lead to similar lexical entities being classified as different) and any use of apostrophes (the slightly-curved vs. completely straight apostrophe proved a hassle). Some of these challenges could be avoided with a different research design. For starters, I would suggest that beginner scholars using such methods in our discipline should consider analyzing data that exists as offline text (such as a dataset extracted from PDF files) rather than pulling data directly from text that is encoded in HTML on an online webpage; ultimately, many of the character and text issues I fixed came from dealing with a variety of online entities that each used their own stylistic and encoding idiosyncrasies.

Processing the Data: NLP

After cleaning the data, the text files and their docx backups resembled the original online article; a person reading the text file on my computer versus the article webpage would find them pretty much identical. But, even after being cleaned, textual data still need to be processed by the program before analysis. The data processing step is designed to maintain as much of the substantive importance within a text as possible while streamlining the computational process behind making conclusions with CATA software. Over the last two decades, scholars in computational science and computational linguistics have developed general standard processes for processing texts for analytic purposes; such processes are collectively known as Natural Language Processing (NLP), but not all projects and procedures use identical NLP processes (Ignatow and Mihalcea 2016; Neuendorf 2017;)

NLP streamlines and facilitate the analysis of textual data based on core tenets of the natural use of language and the computational technicality behind automated-textual-analysis; NLP essentially looks to shed "waste" or "fluff" from the data. Though different projects have reasons for using slightly different tools, NLP in the English language generally works off a similar core of procedures, which I draw upon in my project. In natural language, particularly in grammatically correct published material such as the news texts, there are many lexical entities that aren't substantively useful; consider words such as "of, for, to, the, but," and others. These words are often referred to as "stopwords," and they are commonly removed in some NLP procedures. In my topic models solutions, I removed stopwords using the stopwords-iso list, one of the larger and more aggressive lists of stopwords available. I personally recommend this list of stopwords; I found that the more popular but smaller lists of "snowball" and "smart" still leave a lot of stopwords within the data. For the purposes of my project, I decided to remove as many stopwords as possible, as the dataset is quite large.

In my topic models analysis, in addition to removing stopwords, I also "stemmed" the data; this process takes the texts and converts their words to a common root, i.e. converting "running, run, ran" into "run, run, run." By removing stopwords and stemming the text, researchers essentially shrink the number of data points within the corpus (the number of unique words) without greatly removing the meaningful semantic entities which drive the text's substantive significance. This is also the logic behind the final steps of removing words that are only two characters or less (as these are likely remaining stopwords or stemmed versions of titles such as "Mr."), as well as removing words which appear very infrequently and/or words that exhibit over-occurrence (per

each corpus, I removed words that appeared in less than 5% of the texts and more than 95% of the texts). In the exploration of diversity rearticulations, I used a slightly less aggressive strategy for removing unimportant lexical entities, but much of it was similar to the procedure described here for the topic models. Importantly, I made these decisions after comparing some findings based on a variety of options available to me in NLP, and I decided on presenting a final set of findings based on the procedure outline above. There is not necessarily a one-size-fits-all approach to the detailed and long process of NLP, and I recommend future researchers consider findings that reflect different NLP procedures before settling on the process that is best for their project.

Software

Most of the data cleaning and extraction process (moving from a list of URLS to a series of unique text files) was primarily conducted in R and RStudio. The API information, article URLs, and the text in articles were assembled and extracted via the R-packages HTTR, JasonLite, Rvest, and rSelenum; note that some of these packages are essentially wrappers of one another, and all of them are dependent on the XML family of packages designed specifically to parse text from xml and html code. The scrape process also involved the "CSS selector" extension by Harvey Wickham. Most of my analysis of the texts themselves, as well as the preceding NLP procedures, was completed using the Quanteda package created by Keneth Benoit and colleagues, with supplemental usage of the topicmodels, stopwords, and tidytext packages data analysis. Quanteda, with the extension packages, can handle natural language processing (NLP) and a variety of QCA analytic tools. Quanteda has three main types of objects (corpus, tokens, and document feature matrix [dfm]); each represents a different but connected representation of the

original text, albeit highly transformed depending on the task at hand. The different levels are essentially rearrangements or transformations of the original texts (this process doesn't affect the text files themselves), and moving between them is not too challenging. All things considered, I personally recommend Quanteda for future researchers, as it combines several existing operations and functions from earlier textual-analysis packages in a more intuitive and systematic way; another advantage is its relatively high compatibility with other R packages, as Quanteda works through the tidyverse. There are also many free tutorials an similar online resources one can find for quanteda, but I don't feel the same is true of some QCA alternatives (such as the package tm, short for "text mining").

Findings

The Sample: Core Descriptive Statistics and Exploring "Multiculturalism"

The original list of compiled URLs (links to texts that met the sampling strategy) from NewsAPI had 9,098 links in total. The final sample was somewhat smaller, with a total of 8,484 unique texts across six of the seven organizations initially selected for the sampling strategy. This gap is due to several reasons, the first of which was the original inclusion and then removal of another news source, MSNBC. When I first started the project, MSNBC seemed like another useful source to sample and scrape as representative of a Left-leaning cultural viewpoint. The final list from NewsAPI, however, revealed less than two-hundred articles from MSNBC, as opposed to several hundred or even over one-thousand in some of the other corpuses as described below in

Table 1. Therefore, I decided to exclude MSNBC from this analysis; the low number of texts in the sub-sample would have impeded meaningful interpretations of findings via a compare-and-contrast methodology. Additionally, I removed duplicate and blank texts from the original list of URLs. Below, in addition to descriptive statistics, Figures 2.a – 2.f present frequencies of texts sample over time per each corpus, depending on which day within the 690 day window the texts were published upon. Note that there is a slight gap in the various histograms which present frequencies over time; due to a technical glitch, it seems NewsAPI had a small gap in the continuous searching and scraping of relevant texts. As this gap was fairly equally applied to all six corpuses, I don't believe it is any cause for concern.

Table 1 here

Figure 1 here

Figure 2.a – 2.f here

One descriptive feature of particular interest about the dataset as a whole is the prevalence of the language of "multiculturalism" and similar terms. As described above, such language was included in the API search-and-scrape strategy, meaning that any pertinent articles would have been identified alongside those that used "diversity" and similar language. In line with my discussion of how diversity has mostly supplanted multiculturalism, basic frequencies show that multiculturalism is relatively unimportant to the texts. Below, Table 1.5 provides exact frequencies and proportions, based off the search operator "multicultural*" (the Boolean asterisk ensured that "multiculturalism," "multiculturals," etc. were also identified; hyphens were reformatted prior to searching so that "multi-cultural*" was also included in the search).

Table 1.5 here

The six samples in their entirety are fairly large, but in each instance, most of the texts that were identified by the NewsAPI tool were selected because they used "*diversity"* or a similar term; presumably, every article that didn't have multiculturalism in it somewhere had the diversity language and was therefore identified by the original scrape of URLs. This large sample of naturally-occurring texts in the social world was constructed by selecting texts for their usage of "diversity and/or "multiculturalism" (with various conjugations of these words). Table {ADD} shows that only 4.1% of the texts that thusly qualified for selection did so because of their use of the language of "multiculturalism" or a similar term. And, among the 4.1% (347 of the 8474 texts), a substantial number (approximately 40%) also used the term diversity, meaning that very few texts in the overall sample were selected because they contained the language of multiculturalism.

Thus, Table 1.5 indirectly highlights not only the dearth of multiculturalism, but the might of diversity language in comparison. I consider this to be one of the core, important findings of my empirical analysis. Multiculturalism's wane and diversity's rise is a general phenomenon that has been discussed in the diversity discourse literature (e.g. Berrey 2015; Hartman 2015), and critical race theorists have discussed how multiculturalism's attention to racial inequality was likely one of the reasons why the more colorblind and vague language of diversity. However, I believe that this exploration of "diversity" and "multiculturalism" in political news media provides a relatively unique, empirical quantification of this trend. From the perspective of my theory of

racialized keywords, the *signifying chains* of diversity discourse today have very weak and thin connections with the *keyword* of multiculturalism.

That said, multiculturalism isn't necessarily dead in the water. Based on some qualitative close-reading of the texts in this sample, I noticed a few patterns of interest. First, there still are several organizations such as colleges and corporations that have an "Office of Diversity and Multiculturalism," or something of that nature. Several of the articles in the sub-sample were included because they quoted an individual who worked at such an office. Second, note that BRT has both the highest frequency and proportion of texts with "multicultural*" among the six corpuses. Based on a deeper dive into this sub-sub-sample, I noticed a running theme.

In the genealogical chapter, I described how multiculturalism has more sway in international contexts; in comparison to the USA; this phenomenon was also at work here. I think the primary driver of BRT's over-representation of multiculturalism language is because BRT has the most coverage of European news stories and politicians in comparison to the others, and such texts comprise a significant chunk of 92 texts from BRT in this sub-sample (~40-45). While "diversity" can mean anything and is often celebrated in vague ways, this is not the case with "multiculturalism" in the BRT sample; the conversation as often about ethnoracial difference, pluralism, and social change. Consider the following excerpts:

> American progressives use the World Cup soccer tournament for **multiculturalist** virtue-signaling, as an opportunity for them to sneer at the lowbrow Middle America who ignore an international sport that drives the rest of the world bonkers. But foreign soccer fans don't care what American

> globalists think. For them, the World Cup is actually a festival of anti-progressive nationalism and tribal solidarity… So it is heartening to see how quickly the conditioning is thrown off in the cheap seats of a stadium, even when **multiculturalism's** supposedly favorite game is played on the field. [6731.BRT]

> Rapes are soaring in Britain's **multicultural** capital under Labour Mayor Sadiq Khan — but police claim they have no idea what could be behind the increase… Commissioner Dick appeared unwilling to accept that there was any racial or cultural angle to the fact that some 84 per cent of groomers have turned out to be Muslims of South Asian extraction. [1136 BRT]

> "Hungarian foreign minister Peter Szijjarto has blamed the hypocrisy and political correctness of EU leaders on migration for enabling terrorism in Europe…Mr. Szijjarto outlined some of the more fundamental differences in outlook between the Hungarian government and the governments of Western European countries, such as Germany and Sweden, which have embraced mass migration and state-sponsored **multiculturalism**. [1089.BRT]

The excerpts show how the language of multiculturalism often acts as a code for ethnic and racial difference, and such language has a notably negative and derisive normative tone; there's no celebration here. Thus, not only has multiculturalism been dethroned by diversity language, but it seems signal specific attention to race and racial difference in a manner different than in the past. Based on my close reading of the texts here, the language of multiculturalism appears to have morphed into a more sinister and unfavorable code for discussing racial and ethnic difference rather than the celebratory clarion call we have considered it to be in sociology. Both past and present, sociological literature generally describes public attitudes towards this concept as relatively rosy, cheerful, and outwardly-positive, similar to its successor diversity (Ladson-Billings 1996; Hartmann and Gerteis 2005; Kivisto 2012; Hartmann 2005). A positive normative tone

may define the vestiges of a mainstream discourse about "multiculturalism" today, but not the totality of such discourse. My findings suggest that in the far-Right, particularly the *international* far-Right, the explicit deployment of "multiculturalism" is not remotely celebratory in some contexts. The excerpts above are only examples of such discourse in the general sample of BRT texts which referenced" multiculturalism;" several such texts similarly reference this term can come with an ideologically-motivated current of vehemence, contempt, and backlash towards the idea of increasing ethnoracial difference.

To sum up, the language of multiculturalism was generally supreme in the USA and abroad, at least until the rise of diversity discourse from the mid-1980's onwards. Scholars have discussed a general drop in the prevalence of multiculturalism, particularly given how diversity's more colorblind and vague nature fell in line with the general cultural motif of colorblind norms and post-racial ideology in the USA (e.g. Berrey 2015; Hartmann 2015). My findings in this chapter are based on a comprehensive sample of texts from the six news media organizations that used either "diversity" and/or "multiculturalism," including different variations and conjugations of these two keywords. I expected that only a numerical minority of texts in this sampling strategy would be scraped based on their use of "multiculturalism" language specifically, yet I did not expect to see that only 4.1% of the texts featured the sample actually used this term (and even some of those texts were sampled because they used *both* "multiculturalism" and "diversity" language). Thus, it seems that the language of multiculturalism has been fully dethroned. It hasn't necessarily disappeared, and a cursory examination shows that some texts still used this term because they were discussing institutions and organizations with an "Office of Multiculturalism." But, a disproportionately high number of instances

of multiculturalism came from BRT. Further qualitative exploration of that sub-sample showed a substantial chunk of such BRT texts had an international, European focus. Among these texts, the framing and ideological usage of "multiculturalism" was not a celebration of difference and interracial harmony. Rather, the term is used in ways that can actually work as a rally bigoted, nationalist, and xenophobic understandings about race and difference in society.

This remainder of the Findings is split into in two substantive parts. Akin to a data report, my goal is to highlight baseline descriptive findings about (a) the texts themselves, via topic models findings and Bag-of-Words analysis, and (b) rearticulations of "diversity" discourse, via Tokens analysis and qualitative description. Together, the findings I describe in these two sections capture important and core findings within this dataset which could work as the foundation for different research papers.

In Part I of Findings, I present results from unstructured LDA (Latent Dirichlet Association) topic models, which are a form of "Bag-of-words" analysis. Overall, different bag-of-words words tools make calculations based on words within text, which facilitates drawing substantive conclusions about texts (at the text level) based on the frequencies and co-occurrence words within the text. Individual words are units-of-observation, and the texts are the unit-of-analysis. A key feature of bag-of-words approaches is that because texts within words are analyzed for their frequency and co-occurrence at the text level, the actual position and location of the words within texts is not of importance, hence the term "Bag of Words." Bag-of-words findings generally require more thorough and aggressive NLP procedures.

I present unstructured topic models to illustrate the different topics, themes, and concepts which appear in the six different sub-samples of text. Essentially, the topic models can show us the various social conversations and other discourses that regularly appear in these purposively sampled texts. The findings provide a baseline about the different topics which do and do not feature in these various texts that mention "diversity" or a similar term, thusly shedding light on the functions and implications of the keyword diversity news media. The fundamentally inductive process of unstructured LDA topic models means that a researcher must examine, assess, and consider many different possible solutions; the best solution itself can only be judged as the best solution in tandem with other possibilities. The final findings and interpretation of inductive topic models in any such research is a reflection of the solution that the reader sees *and* several other solutions that were ultimately discarded but still informative in the back-stage research process. In my topic models findings, I have elected to present what I believe are the best solutions, those that find the balance between comprehensiveness of fit and simplicity of interpretation.

The second part of the chapter's findings falls within the "Tokens" form of analysis within QCA, wherein my NLP procedures were less heavy-handed in how they transformed the texts. In contrast to bag-of-words procedures which aggregate and jumble words at the text level, tokens-based analysis generally has the goal preserving the original, natural existence of words in a text as read by human readers; NLP steps are less aggressive, preserving rather than stripping lexical position and word order in documents. They are more computationally-intensive and sometimes redundant in comparison to Bag-of-words analyses, meaning tokens analyses aren't necessarily "better," but they

have advantages. Such methods are generally used when the research question is necessarily fixated on how certain words appear, function, and matter in their natural existence within documents in the social world.

In Part II of my findings, I use tokens-based processes to identify and analyze texts relevant to studying two new but growing directions in diversity discourse, namely rearticulations such as "Diversity of Thought" versus "Diversity and Equity." In order to do this, tokens procedure is necessary, as I constructed these mini-sub-samples based on a specific list of phrases and lexical entities in texts; texts were identified if they used one or more of the phrases relevant to the two mini-sub-samples. I draw on descriptive analysis and qualitative illustration of these texts to explore these rearticulations of diversity discourse on action, particularly their normative and ideological characteristics. In some instances, the rearticulations are used in passing and don't necessarily hold much substantive weight in texts. But, deeper exploration shows that there are clear normative and ideological tenets that structure the rearticulations.

Topic Models

Topic models of textual data are an inductive process, and, there isn't necessarily a firm or correct answer when using topic models. For any textual dataset, a theoretical infinite number of different possible topic solutions exist. In fact, because LDA topic modeling is a form of Bayesian statistics, a researcher could potentially find two distinct topic solutions even if they were to run the exact same line of computer code twice (I accounted for this by using seed-setting options in my code to ensure replicability and consistent results in my own coding).

The infinite possible topic solutions for one textual dataset have the same goal: to identify and list sets of co-occurring words under an unlabelled header of "Topic 1," "Topic 2," etc. To draw conclusions, the researcher will later look at the list of topics and their words (a product of mathematical, computerized calculations) and replace the unlabelled, meaningless headers with topic names of substantive importance (an inductive, subjective process of human interpretation). What differentiates the various, infinite possible topic model solutions is the number of topics (*K*) that the data are fit to. When doing computations, the researcher must pre-select a number for K and include this in the coding to create a topic model; if K = 7, the computer will fit the words to seven unique and unlabelled categories based on how the words cluster and co-occur. But, there isn't necessarily any way to truly *know* that seven is the right, best number of topics. Computing too many topics increases the explanatory power of the mathematical model, but this can lead to over-fitted and redundant topics at the substantive level. Yet, computing too few topics runs the risk of missing important concepts at the substantive level. The most thorough way to deal with this is to create a variety of topic solutions and look through them all. As I described earlier, much of the research process involves producing several different solutions (each with different *K*) so as to see common patterns across the various solutions as a whole. This helps identify the solution which strikes a good balance between parsimony and precision.

Sometimes, one can identify the best number of topics by examining topic perplexities. For each different topic solution based on *K*, that solution has a "perplexity," akin to unexplained variance in inferential statistics. A perplexity plot is similar to a scree plot in factor analysis; the goal is to see where the curve becomes flat when perplexities

are plotted over *K*. In perfect theory, the *K* where the curvature flattens out is ideal. However, in practice, this does not always hold, as is the case in my own project. Below, Figure 2.5 presents a perplexity plot for my six corpuses, with the exact numbers listed in Table 2.5

Figure 2.5

Table 2.5

The perplexity plot shows that the corpuses are amenable to topic model analysis, as the curve continues to descend but becomes flatter and flatter as K increases. That said, there isn't a place where the curves become *purely* flat, indicating that there may not be an upper threshold on the mathematically most explanatory *K*. This indicates that a subjective assessment of the various models, rather than perplexity alone, is a better fit for this project. Calculating and examining the perplexities were helpful (and a standard practice), but I prioritized finding an ideal topic solution based on avoiding overifitting. After assessing topics which seemed redundant at higher *K*, I settled on presenting topic models with *K* ranging from 7 to 10 for this chapter. For future research and papers where I may only focus on one or two of the news sources at a time, I may present higher *K* models, but I still genuinely think that lower *K* is a better choice for these data. Now, I turn to presenting topic model solutions that I adjudicated to be the most informative yet efficient per corpus.

In the tables and figures referenced below, I use the same procedure to describe and visualize the topic model solutions per each of the six corpuses (in alphabetical order by source name). The color-coded bar graphs of words in a topic come from topic betas (the scores that measure how important or prevalent a word is in a topic), and the

corresponding tables that describe topic name (a subjective indicator of the topic's concepts and substance) and measures of topic prevalence within the corpuses based on each texts' topic gammas (scores that measure how prevalently a topic and its associated words appear within a text). For each of the topic solutions, the tables present (b) the prevalence of the topic across the texts at a high level in texts (gamma > 0.7) and a medium level in the texts (gamma > 0.3) level; note that the medium-level calculations include texts that meet the high-level threshold as well. The gamma-based tables are arranged so that topics with a higher number of high-prevalence texts are nearer to the top of the table. Note that the topic numbers in the bar graphs correspond to the topic numbers in the tables. These are presented alongside the subjective names that I've given to the various topics. Across the different corpuses,

I tried to be consistent with topic names across various topic model solutions, but there are notable word differences between similar topics within and across the various sources, leading me to create some sub-topic names (this will be evident in the various topics related to *Gender* in the texts). These differences highlight how even though there is substantial overlap in the topics across the various sources, some contrasts and idiosyncrasies are evident. Across several of the corpuses, some redundant or similar topics appear; these are often labeled as such, e.g. "Immigration 1" and "Immigration 2" in some instances. Below, I briefly narrate the content of the topic model findings per each corpus, then describe important comparisons and contrasts between these solutions as a whole.

FIGURE 3.a HERE

TABLE 3.a HERE

For BRT, I decided to present a seven-model topic solution. The topic with most high-prevalence texts #7, is dubbed "*International: Europe*" the top words are "countri, nation, govern, attack, polic, politic, unit, European, europ, onli," indicating a topic that has to do with nations in Europe, and likely involving some discussion of violent terrorism (examining other solutions corroborated this). Of this topic's important words, the first three have fairly high and similar betas, meaning that the topic most coheres around those lexical entities. This is a product of BRT's coverage style and source formatting; they have a more dedicated page for European audiences and European news. This topic isn't extremely relevant to my project in general, but it is an important reminder of the international nature of far-Right politics and racist populism in the current moment. Of the remaining topics, "*Colleges*" (Topic 2) is the second most prominent topic, cohering around the words "student, divers, university, school, white, black, American, college, educ, campus," indicating a topic that has to do with higher education, and likely involving some discussion of race. The third most prominent topic, "*The Tech Industry*" (Topic 6) has very distinctive and informative words in its top ten: "google, compani, news, facebook, breitbart, twitter, follow, media, employee, divers." The remaining four topics (*Immigration, Politics and Politicians*, and *Gender: Gender and Sexuality*) are substantially less prevalent in the corpus, with both their proportions of high-prevalence texts (gamma > 0.7) and medium-prevalence texts (gamma > 0.3) relatively lower than the top three topics.

FIGURE 3.b HERE

TABLE 3.b HERE

The topic model solution for CNN has ten topics. The most prominent is *Traveling and Tourism (*Topic 3), which is fairly unique to this corpus, a product of CNN's travel sub-page (which seems to mention "diversity" a lot). The second most prominent topic is *Popular Culture and Entertainment* (Top 6), an important theme which appears in several of the corpuses; in this instance, its top words are "black, fashion, design, film, credit, cultur, imag, star, model, american." The third most prevalent topic is (Topic 9) *Gender*: *Gender in the Workplace,* which I named based off the structure of the topic; the figure shows that opposed to most of the other topics, Topic 9 is mostly driven by just two words of importance: "women, compani," followed by a margin by "employe, female, gender, sexual, harass, facebook, board, CEO." The fourth topic, *Immigration* (Topic 4) is a recurring topic. Across the various corpuses, this topic name is based on direct reference to immigration and includes several terms which are related to politics and political debate, often indirectly in a discussion about immigration policy; consider the main words that form the base of the topic in CNN: "trump, preside, immgr." The remaining topics are less prevalent among the texts of the CNN corpus, but several prove to be recurring topics across the remaining corpuses: *Business, Politics and Politicians,* and *Cities and Communities.*

FIGURE 3.c HERE

TABLE 3.c HERE

FOX has seven topics in this solution. The most prevalent (Topic 7) is dubbed *STEM & Natural Science*, based on the prominent words "studi, speci, scientist, space,

human, univers" and others plotted in the figure. This topic is fairly unique to FOX, and the top documents within it are news stories about scientific advancements wherein biodiversity or similar terms are uses frequently. The next most prevalent topic (Topic 8) is *Pop Culture and Entertainment*, based on its two prominent most prominent words, "film" and "star;" although the terms in this topic are somewhat inconsistent. The third topic is *International: China and Israel*, based familiar terms such as "country, govern, leader, protest, nation" and some unique, notable terms such as "israel" and "china" within this topic that are not common elsewhere in the various corpuses. This topic, plus the BRT topic about Europe, shows an important dimension to the most conservative of the two news organizations: their deployment of diversity discourse occurs more frequently when discussing an international context than the other sources, a theme I return to later. The remaining topics in the FOX corpus are *The Tech Industry* and *Colleges*, each of which is based on terms that are fairly familiar to these topics' appearance in other corpuses. Note that while redundancy continues to exist in most of these topic models, FOX actually has *three* unique topics that I label as *Politics and Politicians*; they share several common words that are associated with politics-based topics above.. The distinctions between these seem to come from which political party or politicians are being discussed; consider that Topic 8 is centered on "democrat," which doesn't appear in the other two topics about politics, suggesting that Topic 8 is a politics-based topic more specific to Democratic politicians. But, for the sake of parsimony, I decided to maintain simple and redundant topic names for this project, so I've stuck with the *Politics and Politicians* label when possible.

FIGURE 3.d HERE

TABLE 3.d HERE

Huffington Post has ten topics. A similar face, *Politics and Politicians*, is at the top of the table (Topic 6) and is comprised of terms common to previously described topics of this nature, such as "democrat, elect, parti, republican, vote, campaign" and others. The second most prevalent topic (Topic 9) is another recurring entity, *Pop Culture and Entertainment*, with recognizable word such as "film, movi, charact, asian, black, star, actor," and others. The third-most prevalent topic is a bit trickier, and may be an instance of meaningless overfitting; several of the top terms such as "feel, lot, love" may be better treated as stopwords. Based on some words such as "love," "person," and "friend," I decided to name this topic *Relationships and Social Networks*. Then, Topic 8 is *Immigration and Politics*; similar to above, the terms seem to be a mix of words relevant to politics and immigration, such as "trump, immigr, presid;" note, however, that the word "trump" seems to do most of the heavy lifting in this topic. The next topic (Topic 4) is a little unclear; I named it *STEM and Public Health* as it seems to be a mix of words associated with climate change, health, guns, life and death, and potentially the human body. In HFF, we see the first instance of a topic more common in the corpuses below; the *Business* topic is based on the top terms of topic 2, which are "compani, employe." The remaining topics are fairly similar in their general prevalence in HFF; they are *Colleges, Race in the USA, Cities and Communities,* and *Gender: Gender and Sexuality*.

FIGURE 3.e HERE

TABLE 3.e HERE

NYT has nine topics. The most prevalent is *Politics and Politicians,* comprised of recognizable words such as "democrat, republican, trump," and others. The next topic is the familiar *Pop Culture and Entertainment,* although it is slightly unique in this NYT solution as opposed to elsewhere. Lower in the table, note the related but distinct topic (Topic 5) which I have named *Fine Arts, Culture, and Entertainment* topic in this solution lower in the table. This topic is fairly to unique to NYT, with top words "art, artist, music, museum." This is another case where we may be seeing overfitting, or there may be a substantive difference between diversity discourse when it applies to movies than when it is used to discuss a museum or art gallery; diving down this rabbit hole could comprise its own research project. The remaining topics in New York Times are familiar faces: *Business, STEM and Natural Science, Colleges and Universities, Cities and Communities, Gender: Gender and Sexuality*, and *Immigrations*. Among these topics' top words, many of the same words reappear here as in the other corpuses.

FIGURE 3.f HERE

TABLE 3.f HERE

Wall Street Journal has eight topics. The most prevalent topic (Topic 4) is the familiar and substantively clear *Colleges and Universities*. In this news source, known for being focused on Wall Street and business, it is not surprising that the second- and third-most prevalent topics in WSJ are two *Business* topics. Then, the fourth-most prevalent Topic is *Gender: Gender in the Workplace*. This topic has an interesting beta distribution; "woman" is the strongest term in the topic, followed by "compani, employee, manag,

execut" and other business terms. The remaining topics in WSJ are the common, recognizable topics of *Immigration*, two topics for *Politics and Politicians,* and *Cities and Communities*.

As I've described, there are some issues of over-fitting and redundant topics within the solutions I did select to present. But, I believe these are the most substantive informative and efficient solutions; even those corpuses with overfit or redundant topics were tighter and substantively clearer than their other possible solutions. Comparing across the tables, we see there are many topics common to most or all of the corpuses. Yet, some of these topics do have key differences in the words which drive them between different corpuses. Furthermore, there are a few topics which seem more important to some of the corpuses than others. Essentially, while there are overarching patterns in how the keyword "diversity" is used in political news media texts across the political spectrum, there are differences that we see especially when comparing across the various, politically-contrasting news sources; this is illustrative of the functions, uses, and implications of diversity discourse(s) in American media and culture.

Table 4 provides a look at the commonality or uniqueness of the various topics in the presented solutions across the six corpuses. The table has three main sections. First, there are topics that have similar top terms across the various corpuses and are quite prevalent across several of the news organizations; these are "consistent topics." Then, there are topics which only appear in a few of the corpuses, and/or have various dimensions that differentiate between such topics. Then, the table lists a few topics which only appear in texts in from only one of the six news organizations. Below, I elaborate on topics that are more common to the sample as a whole versus more unique to certain

news organizations. I also discuss some themes I noticed from qualitative close-reading of texts that exhibited high gamma for particular topics (> 0.95), describing general themes and normative undercurrents I noticed in such texts.

Table 4 here

The top of Table 4 shows that there are several core topic domains and themes in which diversity discourse proves relevant to all or most of the textual corpuses from the six different news organizations. These are *Politics and Politicians, Colleges and Universities, Immigration, Cities and Communities, Business,* and *Pop Culture and Entertainment.* Importantly, these topic domains and their related social settings have generally been important to racial contestation in the USA. Furthermore, I indirectly discussed all of these topics in my genealogical chapter as relevant to the past, present, and future of how diversity discourse is interwoven with racial contestation. As I described, diversity discourse spawned in colleges (Berrey 2011; Stulberg and Chen 2013) and corporations (Kelly and Dobbin 1998; Harper and Reskin 2005) following the politicization and backlash surrounding the specter of "affirmative action" (Lipson 2008; Pierce 2013; Berrey 2015). I also described how studying and interrogating underrepresentation of different identities in popular culture has been a longstanding research tradition that has been recently galvanized by a burst of more diverse movies and TV shows in American media (Gray 2016; Yuen 2017; Chattoo 2018; Lindner and Barnard 2020). Additionally, I discussed the need for greater sociological and critical attention to understanding how diversity discourse factors into the ways people and communities react to increasing immigration, ethnoracial difference, and a changing population (Craig and Richeson 2014; Danbold and Huo 2015; Craig, Rucker, and

Richeson 2018a, 2018b; Frey 2018; Alba 2019). The findings in Table 4 show that diversity discourse continues to be relevant to such topic domains, as media texts from most or all of the six news organizations consistently contained words indicative of these topics.

In the twenty-first century, sociologists would likely agree that the symbolic and material aspects of the common topic domains in Table 4—politics, colleges, immigrations, communities, business, and pop culture—continue to be sites of racial contestation and the clash between reactionary and progressive racial projects. Race and racism is still a defining force in American politics; my genealogical chapter discussed how the Obama and Trump presidencies should be seen in the context of an era of "racial neopopulism," one where racial contestation has resurged to the forefront of political ideology and partisanship (Tesler 2016; Mutz 2018; Myers and Levy 2018; Bonilla-Silva 2019). Colleges, and the role of race in admissions and equity policy, are still a hot-button topic, and the *Students for Fair Admissions* group continues sponsor bring anti-affirmative-action litigation . Immigration policy, such as "crimmigration" law (Beckett and Evans 2015; Armenta 2017) and backlash towards immigration (Craig, Rucker, and Richeson 2018a, 2018b; Blinder and Schaffner 2019) continue to be shaped by racial identity and white backlash towards the browning of America. Racial inequality in business, as well as attention to racial inequality in hiring and promotions, is another battleground of racial contestation (Dobbin, Kalev, and Schrage 2015). Finally, as described above, increasing racial representation in Hollywood is another dimension to racial contestation and America's political-ideological culture wars (Lindner and Barnard 2020). Correspondingly, my findings about texts from six nationally-recognize show that

"diversity" and similar keywords are still relevant to how the news media texts describe news stories about these topics, highlighting how diversity discourse is still implicated in ways that our society describes these topic domains, evidenced in my large sample of texts from six nationally-recognized and politically varied news media organizations.

Five of the six news organizations had gender-related topics in their selected topic model solution, but *Gender* is in the "mixed" category of topics in Table 4, a product of my decision to give several sub-names to gender-related topics in the corpuses (*Gender and Sexuality*, *Gender in the Workplace*, and *Gender in Society*). This is because, unlike some of the other topics such as *Politics and Politicians* or *Immigration,* the *Gender* topics did not have as much consistency in their various top words. Each did have the same absolute top word with the highest ranked beta per solution ("woman"), but the various words following with relatively high betas diverged substantially. The words in the first gender-related topic seemed to indicate a discussion of queer and non-cis identities, hence the term *Gender and Sexuality*. The words in a second gender-related topic generally cohered around companies and employment, leading to a *Gender in the Workplace* topic. The third gender-related topic, unique to NYT, had top words "polit, cultur, social, american, countri" following the top word "woman." Subjectively, I could see where other researchers might disagree, but I chose to name this topic *Gender and Society*.

At the current time, the term "diversity" clearly has significance not only for race-related issues, but also for gender inequality and representation. As described in the genealogical chapter, the earliest implementations of equity policy attentive were not only attentive to race, but also to applicant gender in college admissions and corporate

employment (Kelly and Dobbin 1998; Skrentny 1996; Katznelson 2005). Consequently, the eventual shift towards "diversity" policy and rhetoric meant that diversity discourse became highly salient in social conversations related to gender representation and gender (in)equality (Berrey 2015; Lipson 2008; Herring and Henderson 2011). The *Gender in the Workplace* topic shows that today, diversity discourse is similarly relevant to how news media organizations discuss news stories about gender and businesses. Qualitative close-reading of a few dozen texts which had high gammas for this topic (>0.95) shows that several such texts involved litigation or allegations of sexual harassment, discriminatory workplace culture, and other instances of patriarchy in the workplace. In several such stories, a representative from the company's office of diversity management commented on how their company prides itself on diversity.

Thus, while diversity discourse is primarily studied in this project as relevant to racialized discourse, I hope that my project is not perceived (and my theory of "racialized keywords") as intentionally inattentive of the importance of intersectional perspectives. Diversity discourse has many implications not only for racial contestation, but also for how society frames and understandings gender, sexuality, and related hierarchies. In the same ways that diversity discourse falls short of fostering racial justice, the same is true regarding the ability of diversity discourse to effectively address sexism and homophobia in our society. In fact, as I discuss in my concluding chapters, other racialized keywords (such as "affirmative action" and "welfare queens") have discursively functioned in ways that are racialized *and* highly relevant to gender inequality and patriarchal cultural frames.

Among the mixed topics in Table 4, some were unique to the most conservative two news organizations, FOX and BRT. These topics were *Tech Industry* and the two *International* topics, on which focuses on *Europe* whereas the other has more focus on *Israel* and *China*. The *Tech Industry* topic is of particular significance, a theme I return to more so when discussing "Diversity of Thought" rearticulations in the texts. My qualitative close reading shows that the deployment of "diversity" language in texts relating to the tech industry is often rooted in conservative perceptions that platform such as Google, Facebook, and Twitter are conspiring against Republican politicians and web pages that promote conservative ideology. Therefore, their discussion of "diversity" in such contexts often involves invoking core tenets of mainstream diversity discourse, such as valorizing difference. As I discuss later, rearticulations such as "diversity of thought" function by arguing for a particular normative agenda or ideological platform as a form of social and personal difference that belongs under the diversity mantle.

Then, of the two *International* topics, I decided to give them different sub-topic names due to the differences in their top terms. BRT, as I've mentioned elsewhere, has a substantial focus on Europe which is unique to this corpus in comparison to the other texts. FOX has its own unique international topic, one which mentions Israel and China. In conservative platforms today, support for Israel is a longstanding plank, while painting China as a bogeyman represents a newer trend in conservative politics. The presence of these topics in the texts from the two most conservative news sources in my sample illustrates that conservative news media texts deploy "diversity" and "multiculturalism" discourse as relevant to international politics, but that doesn't seem to be as common among the more centrist or liberal news organizations.

One topic that was not extremely prevalent across the corpuses was *Racial Identity and Difference*, which was only really present HFF and CNN. Even within these two corpuses, this topic was fairly infrequent, ranked near the bottom of each corpuses' specific table in the topic model solutions. There were relatively few texts that showed a very high prevalence of this topic. Furthermore, unlike some of the other topics I examined here, I actually saw *very* few texts that had a very high gamma for this text (none had gamma 0>.90). This suggests that among the texts that discussed racial identity and racial difference, such conversation was part of a larger topic (potentially immigration, politics, or one of the other more-prevalent topics). I don't think these findings invalidate the idea of diversity as a racialized keyword and the broader conclusion that diversity discourse is implicated in racial contestation in the USA; our society is still defined by an overarching post-racial ideology and colorblind racial norms (Bonilla-Silva 2003; Omi and Winant 2015), so we shouldn't expect these topic model findings to reveal a massive prevalence of words that explicitly mention racial identity and difference.

The remaining topics in Table 4 seem less important to racial contestation in the USA, and they are also less prominent across the topic model solutions for the six news organizations. Based on the use of term such as "bio-diversity" and similar STEM vocabulary, Table 4 shows that *STEM* was another sparse set of topics. Out of the texts with high gammas for this topic, the majority seemed to use "bio-diversity" or some similar STEM vocab, meaning I don't think they have much importance for racial contestation in the USA. But, a few such texts did note the increased racial and gender diversity in various research teams, including NASA and other high-profile STEM

research organizations. Finally, across all the corpuses, there are some topics which do not consistently appear at all, such as CNN's *Traveling and Tourism* topic, NYT's *Fine Arts and Culture* topic, and HFF's *Relationships and Social Networks* topic. As these three topics were unique to one of the six corpuses, I think it is fair to say that American news media barely deploys diversity discourse or the language of diversity and multiculturalism when discussing such topics, and such findings are probably products of one news organization's stylistic and journalistic choice to have a "tourism" page in the first place.

In sum, the findings from the topic models illustrate the social conversations and topic domains wherein diversity discourse proves relevant in news media texts. These are politics, colleges, immigration, business, and pop culture; these topic domains are relevant to racial contestation both historically and today. Thus, the prevalence of such topics in these texts that were sampled for their use of "diversity" and "multiculturalism" illustrates that diversity discourse is relevant to how the six different news organizations discuss the common topic domains. Then, deeper exploration shows that diversity discourse proves relevant to news media discussions of gender and international news, although these topics are less prevalent and consistent. Finally, there are few topics which are only relevant to one of the six news organizations. Now, I now turn to the second sub-section of my findings regarding rearticulations of diversity discourse.

Rearticulations of Diversity

In this section, I present some core findings about the two forms of rearticulations of "diversity" which are similar but distinct from the mainstream diversity discourse that

we know. First, after describing how I identified and analyzed the sub-samples, I briefly provide some quantification of the phenomena, and I present the top-words that occur in each corpus' texts within the sub-samples. I then turn to providing some rudimentary beginnings of a qualitative codebook to consider major themes, news stories, and topics that are relevant to the texts' deployments of the rearticulation phrase. Finally, I present several excerpts that illustrate the functions, uses, and implications for one of the more concerning and pressing issue of "Diversity of Thought" rearticulations. The findings I present here will be developed into a more focused, dedicated paper which uses mixed-methods textual analysis to study rearticulations of diversity in my dataset. In my narration of these basic findings, I consider ways that I plan to expand on the analyses presented here. That said, I would state that all such future work is still empirically and conceptually based on the core findings I describe in this chapter.

As described in my earlier chapters, mainstream diversity discourse is experiencing rearticulations which are indicative of and relevant to racial contestation and the general culture wars in the USA. I see two diametrically-opposed trends in the lexical entities, meanings, and ideological goals that are wrapped up in on the keyword "diversity:" *Diversity of Thought* and similar phrases versus *Diversity of Inclusion, Diversity of Equity,* and similar phrases. The first batch of rearticulations is a more nascent trend, one wherein the abstract concept "diversity of thought" is valorized in ways that purposefully serve partisan politics and ideological agendas that ultimately uphold racial hierarchy and patriarchy. The second batch are a little less new, and such rearticulations are at least somewhat attentive to inequalities and discursively connect the idea of diversity with some level of acknowledgment inequality as well as celebrating

difference. These rearticulations work based of the discursive tenets and meanings of mainstream diversity discourse, particularly the idea that difference is good and that the keyword "diversity" is a positive concept that should be cherished. From there, however, these new rearticulations should be seen as distinct sub-entities of a broader landscape of diversity discourse.

The two sets of phrases are labeled as *Diversity of Thought* and *Diversity and Inclusion/Equity*. To identify relevant texts, I used regex search operators to capture texts if they used one of the following phrases. Based on internal searches of the six different corpuses, I identified a list of texts that used one or more of the phrases that was imputed into the search string for each of these rearticulation-sub samples. Below, Tables 4.a lists the various search strings I used for each sub-sample. Figure 4.a provides two histograms that chart the frequency of texts within each subsample overlaid over a histogram of the total sample over time; Figure 4.b and Figure 4.c present individual histograms of the subsamples over time. Then, Table 4.b provides descriptive statistics about the two sub-samples' texts. Table 4.c and 4.d list top words per news source in the sub-samples.

Figures 4.a, 4.b, 4.c here

Tables 4.a. 4.b, 4.c, 4.d here

Notably, the sub-samples are each fairly small in comparison to the overall size of the full set of six corpuses. In Figure 4.a, the histogram of frequencies over time is barely a sliver of the main sample. This is the first substantive finding, and while simple, it is telling, especially as the identification of texts was extra-permissive. My close-reading shows that a large number of these texts, particularly in the *Diversity and*

Equity/Inclusion sub-sample, simply used one of these phrases in passing; a common example was when a text quoted an individual whose official title included the phrase "Diversity and Equity" or a similar phrase. A large number of these texts to not greatly engage with the rearticulations or exhibit clear normative, ideological characteristics; they simply have one of the relevant phrases somewhere in the text. Essentially, the sub-sampling strategy represents an inflated discursive snapshot of the frequency of these rearticulation phrases that are associated with "diversity." But, even with this over-inflation, the sub-samples are still fairly miniscule in comparison to the overall corpus. Therefore, I feel that this is one of my project's core original, empirical contributions. From a substantive standpoint, my project has found that the rearticulations of *Diversity of Thought* and *Diversity and Inclusion/Equity* are (currently) not major, defining dimensions of diversity discourse as deployed in American news media. Even with the overinflated sub-sample, we see that phrases associated with the rearticulations exist very infrequently in this large body of news media texts.

I plan on doing more to develop this quantification of these rearticulations; two possible ideas a future paper would be following up on the core frequency findings with a targeted KWIC analysis and N-grams analysis, two Tokens-based methods in the world of automated text analysis. KWIC ("Keyword in Context") analysis studies the frequencies of words that naturally occur near a specified keyword. Based on internal searches of the texts in a corpus, researches generate sub-lists of the words that appear within five words to the left and right of the keyword of interest. That list is then qualitatively and quantitatively explored for substantive importance. Similarly, N-grams also study the words that occur near a keyword of interest; this computationally-intensive

process turns the words in text into conjoined word entities that can be two word bi-grams, three word tri-gram, or higher (although I've seen very little research that goes beyond the tri-gram level). This transformation would provide more quantification of the probabilities and frequencies associated with the phrases which I sampled upon for constructing the sub-samples, as well as potentially identifying a few other phrases which prove relevant. Overall, some of these tools would be necessary for publishing more rigorous, validated, and standard-practice findings about the prevalence of the rearticulations within this snapshot of diversity discourse in text. validation of the core findings based on standard practices in textual analysis research. But, I strongly suspect that the future analysis will mostly corroborate the core finding (i.e., phrases associated with *Diversity of Thought/Viewpoint* and *Diversity of* rearticulations occur very infrequently in the text). That low frequency of relevant phrases and texts itself would form the empirical data distributions upon which more complex tokens-based analysis would be built; essentially, the mathematics of more complex Tokens methods will probably validate and reflect the scarcity of these rearticulations of "diversity" within the totality of diversity discourse.

Of course, while the sub-samples represent a small fraction of the overall sample, the sub-samples themselves are not objectively tiny; each still comprises of a few hundred texts, and a baseline descriptive about the sub-samples are quite informative. When we study the frequencies, we see that there are clear trends in which sources constitute the samples. For example, there is a relatively large proportion of texts in the *Diversity of Thought* sub-sample which came from BRT and FOX, the most conservative of the news sources. Then, contrastingly, the *Diversity of Equity/Inclusion* sub-sample

has a high proportion of posts from HFF, the most liberal of three sources. In this large dataset of texts which naturally occur in the social world, *Diversity of Thought* rearticulations seem more likely to be used by Right-leaning news media texts, while *Diversity of Inclusion/Equity* seem more likely to be deployed by Left-leaning media. This is a second simple but core finding, one that is indicative of these rearticulations' ideological and normative implications as described in earlier chapters.

Using QDAS.Miner, software similar to NVivo and Atlas.ti, I have begun some qualitative exploration and close-reading of the texts. I decided to stay away from the form of intra-document coding which we sociologists are more familiar with, particularly when it comes to coding text from a structured research interview. Unlike a collection of several dozen interviews which were administered through a systematized interview guide, the news texts in the total sample and these-sub-samples have much less in common with each other, and there is no automatic metadata information to make sense of intra-document comparisons. Highlighting individual paragraphs or sentences with a variety of intra-document codes is not as useful as it is for qualitative analysis of interview data.

The following example is probably familiar to sociologists wherein intra-document codes would be standard practice. A researcher conducts fifty interviews with married hetero couples in a study about household chores and gender. The researcher would use intra-document level codes to analyze the chores being done and who does them. After going through the texts and highlighting the relevant bits about "Laundry," "Cooking," and "Vacuuming," they could compile information about the intra-document codes with metadata to make conclusions such as, "Among the fifty participants, women

participants were more likely to discuss doing the laundry, cooking, and/or vacuuming. I know this because while all the participants did discuss laundry to some degree, 80-90% of the highlighted text about the details of washing and folding came from women participants." This hypothetical study about sexism in household chores would want to use intra-document coding, but that is because there is a strong and defined metadata for the interview texts, as all of the texts revolve around a discussion about household chores. If all the participants were asked a question such as "Describe your laundry process," it is presumable that most of them said at least something about laundry, even if not much. But, in my exploration of a large pile of relatively unstructured texts that don't necessarily have much in common (barring one three word phrase such as "diversity of thought"), intra-document codes are not as useful, at least not without some level of metadata construction that makes comparisons more meaningful. With the goal of publishing a dedicated paper about rearticulations of diversity in action, I may use intra-document codes to compare thematically similar texts once the document-level codes have been finalized and validated as ironclad metadata about the samples.

Table 5.a here

Table 5.b here

In Table 5.a, I present short lists based on the most prevalent news stories and themes in the two-sub samples. First, each table lists what I see as over-arching story themes, essentially "super-codes" that cluster together similar running news stories. The table also provides some description and notes about specific news stories and noticeable clusters of articles that discussed the topic. Systematizing this information will form the

basis for document level codes in future publications. At the moment, I decided against presenting the current frequencies of my document-level codes that come from qualitative-reading, as there some kinks I still need to work out. From a subjective standpoint, there are a few documents which either (a) equally reflect more than one running theme, or (b) don't really have a clear topic at all. I plan to use a combination of more human-based reading and automated procedures to finalize a more robust document-level coding scheme. For this chapter's purposes of presenting core patterns in the data, I present the prototype document-level codes with a general rank for themes and news stories that are more prevalent than others.

Based on the procedure for the first substantive part of the findings in this chapter, I did generate some LDA topic models for these texts with rearticulations, but I also decided against presenting them for three reasons. First, I think the themes identified with qualitative-close-reading seemed substantively similar and more efficient to present than the jumble of math, graphs, and tables that come with topic model solutions. Second, as LDA topic modeling and CATA-based QCA is still a developing and constantly-evolving method, I haven't been able to ascertain the field's conventions on whether it is analytically sound to conduct LDA analysis upon these relatively small sub-samples; with my limited knowledge of Bayesian statistics, I suspect there are other QCA methods that would be better suited to sub-samples of this size. Third, since topic models are driven by word frequencies anyway, I've compiled the top words in each sub-sample's mini-corpus in tables above in Tables 4.c and 4.d (e.g., the top words from BRT sources that were in the *Diversity of Thought/Viewpoint* sample, and then so on).

Together, the qualitatively-identified themes and the computer-calculated top words point to important substantive characteristics of how the different news sources deploy the phrases associated with diversity rearticulations which I hope to expand on in future work. For the purposes of this chapter and the dissertation, as a whole, I discuss two important directions in each rearticulation sub-samples, with text excerpts to illustrate my points. From the standpoint of a critical race theorist, we should expect that these currently small, nascent directions in diversity discourse will have important implications and impacts for racial contestation and the culture wars in the USA. Even though they made just a small part of the overall sample of general diversity discourse, these rearticulations are highly relevant to American culture and politics. In particular, "Diversity of Thought" discourse seem particularly pivotal to conservatives' antagonistic discourses about the academy, Hollywood and the tech industry; terms relevant to such topic domains are highly prevalent in the BRT and FOX sub-samples, more so than in the other sources which are less conservative than those two. In future research, I hope different QCA tools based off these top-words can make systematic comparisons between the texts.

But, even without systematic tools, there are striking and obvious patterns in these texts. Among these is the weaponization of "diversity of thought" and similar phrases in the BRT mini-sub-sample, which is in great contrast to the ways that such phrases are used in texts from the other sources. As I described in my earlier chapters, "diversity of thought" itself is not an issue in my eyes; at the abstract level, I agree that diversity of thought is good. But, ironically, there isn't any diversity of thought to the ways that BRT authors themselves are using that phrase; without a doubt, there as an identical

ideological foundation and normative agenda which guides how the texts approach the concept. Below, I present two sets of excerpts from texts in the *Diversity of Thought/Viewpoint* sub-sample; the first is from HFF, and the second set on the following page is from BRT. I've bolded the relevant phrase in these excerpts:

> Nevada's statehouse began its legislative session and became the first state in the nation to have a female-majority state legislature. Female lawmakers wore corsages and spoke about the importance of the shift…. "We are going to have diversity, we are going to have **diversity of thought**," Minority Whip Lisa Krasner (R) said in the Assembly chamber Monday. "We are going to have diversity of opinion. We are going to have diversity of life experiences. And so I think that is going to bring new ideas and a new way of dealing with issues, and new issues will come up just because of that diversity." [1391.HFF]

> The Boston Globe, the region's major newspaper, gave Pressley their endorsement. "I would like more women to consider government as a mid-career option, women who have been in our classrooms, running companies," she told HuffPost Partner Studio in 2016. "Having greater parity, both racially and in gender [in government], is vital because solutions are more innovative when you have **diversity of perspective** and opinion and thought." [2559.HFF]

> If Houlahan defeats Costello in the midterms, she'll bring some much-needed **diversity of perspective** and experience to Pennsylvania's delegation. "It's not just that it's all men, it's all men who are lawyers, for the most part," Houlahan said. "We have people with one skill set representing us." [4368.HFF]

> "Women need to understand that in order to get ahead, you don't want to wait for the invitation to make a difference. Step into a challenging role when there is no guarantee for success" Lohrenz says. Thinking of the global security issues, both Kobzaruk and Lohrenz agree this is a good time for

> women to be in leadership roles around the world. “We need **diversity of thought**,” Kobzaruk says. [8869.HFF]

Of these excerpts, the usage of “diversity of thought” and similar phrases is generally associated with goals that are conventionally liberal. In the above, gender underrepresentation and obstacles facing women are a general theme. Thus, the phrase *diversity of thought* is being used to defend the idea that women should be more represented in positions of leadership. I see no problem with this usage of the phrase “diversity of thought” or similar endeavors that seek to address inequalities and underrepresentation. What’s more concerning, however, is how this rearticulation plays out in texts from BRT; see the excerpts below.

> YouTube appears to be increasingly out of step with the values of its own users The platform's CEO, Susan Wojcicki, is one of the most progressive executives in Silicon Valley, someone who believes there can be “too much freedom of speech,” and who personally joined the chorus of SJW [Social Justice Warrior] outrage at Google demanding that **viewpoint diversity** advocate James Damore be fired. [1405.BRT]

> Writing for the Chronicle of Higher Education, Notre Dame Professor Christian Smith … bemoaned the lacked of **intellectual diversity** in many academic fields, specifically the humanities and social sciences. He argues that the academics in these fields are hypocrites because they fail to live up to the values of diversity and tolerance that they often preach. “BS is the grossly lopsided political ideology of the faculty of many disciplines, especially in the humanities and social sciences, creating homogeneity of worldview to which those faculties are themselves oblivious, despite claiming to champion difference, diversity, and tolerance.” [1537.BRT]

> While many faculty members in higher education already dedicate what appears to be an exorbitant amount of time toward issues revolving around their ideas of diversity and inclusion, Kenyon College has now decided to write it into its guidelines for achieving

> tenure status and promotions… While everyone on staff who voiced their opinions allegedly agreed to the new expectations, the revised guidelines nonetheless set a precedent that would require new professors potentially seeking tenure at Kenyon to fall in line with a subjective set of standards, curtailing **intellectual diversity** among the school's tenured staff [1601.BRT]
>
> Former Google engineer James Damore was fired for expressing mild criticism of Google's far-left diversity policies and political monoculture. His arguments wouldn't have been out of place in a David Brooks column or a Jonathan Haidt lecture. Despite the mildness of his arguments — which were more liberal centrist than conservative — radical leftists at the company succeeded in getting him fired, after maliciously leaking his **viewpoint diversity** manifesto [2611.BRT]
>
> Facebook and Google's control over the online advertising industry is bad for freedom of speech and **diversity of thought**. The piece echoes sentiments previously expressed on Breitbart …. Epstein notes the huge issues that arise when allowing tech companies, which are solely profit-driven, to act as the arbiters of truth and information. [BRT.4941]

In these excerpts and across the BRT texts in the sub-sample, there is a clear pattern in the discursive, ideological, and normative functions of "diversity of thought" and similar rearticulations. In each instance, we see that despite their insistence of increasing the diversity of viewpoints in colleges and businesses, the only viewpoints that these texts care about are far-Right conservative politics. Nearly all of the time, a highly normative or opinionated text was griping about colleges, entertainment, or social media and the tech industry; it was quite shocking to see how few of the texts actually did not discuss one of those topics. Additionally, all such texts had virtually the same point, akin to "Institution X is mean to conservatives!" Overall, an ironic but fitting tongue-in-cheek conclusion is that Right-leaning diversity-of-thought discourses themselves have no

diversity of thought; they solely exist to pursue standard conservative agendas of legitimizing racist and sexist hierarchies, undermining intellectualism and the academy, and newer conservative missions such as decrying the censorship of hate speech on Facebook. At the time I am drafting the final chapters and conclusion of my dissertation, conservative politicians have been using "diversity of thought" rearticulations to justify a recent burst of legislation and gubernatorial orders that attempt to curb anti-racism and critical-race-theory education in colleges and schools. This new direction truly highlights the normative and discursive implications of "diversity of thought" rearticulations; these phrases may represent a small part of diversity discourse overall, but they have been well and truly incorporated into conservative politics in the USA today, a theme I consider more so in the concluding chapter of this dissertation.

Finally, while it is pleasing to see that *Diversity and Inclusion/Equity* rearticulations have made some headway in the social world, I would caution readers form interpreting the presence of such rearticulations in the text as evidence of a systemic liberalization or progressive shift in American diversity discourse. Among the texts in the sub-sample, a large majority simply mentioned the phrase "diversity and inclusion" in passing. Often, texts quoted an individual whose official job title includes the phrase "diversity and inclusion" or a similar phrase, but didn't go any further than that. Overall, in contrast to the clear normative and ideological dimensions of several texts in the *Diversity of Thought/Viewpoint* sub-sample, the textual substance of this sub-sample was less coherent around a particular worldview or ideology. But, there were a few texts which did point to a more critical, justice-oriented understanding of race and racial

difference among such rearticulations in comparison to mainstream diversity discourse; consider the excerpts below.

> According to Census Bureau estimates, babies of color now outnumber non-Hispanic white babies. Greater **diversity and inclusion** are causing a white backlash rather than greater acceptance, ushering in a white nationalist executive branch, harsher immigration policies, abortion bans, voter suppression and attempted census rigging to maximize white power. [1.CNN]

> With two box-office juggernauts led by casts dominated by people of color, 2018 has been lauded as a landmark year for **diversity and inclusion** in Hollywood. Now, new analysis from the University of Southern California's Annenberg Inclusion Initiative solidifies that "Black Panther" and "Crazy Rich Asians" were part of a year that featured a record number of women and people of color in leading roles since 2007, when the group first began studying the issue. [1302.HFF]

> One of the most stirring moments at Sunday night's Academy Awards came when three of disgraced Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein's accusers introduced a video montage to promote "**equality, diversity, inclusion**, intersectionality." Featuring interviews with trailblazing filmmakers like Barry Jenkins, Ava DuVernay, Greta Gerwig and Dee Rees, the montage crystalized a lot of the themes of the evening… But the examples seemed cherry-picked and already widely known, and many of the milestones that it lauded only came in the last year or two [4007.HFF]

> Strong sponsorship programs, in which men advocate for women inside an organization and work to see talented women promoted, are one step. Just as important, it helps when men are vocal about their efforts to promote women. "**Diversity and equity** tend to be seen as women's work," Ms. Glass said. "Women CEOs are asked constantly what they are doing to elevate other women, whereas men CEOs are almost never held accountable for the advancement of women in their organizations." [2344.NYT]

The excerpts above are from texts which have a relatively progressive worldview. The first, from CNN, is an opinion piece from writer David Love, in which he provides legitimate and needed critiques of racism and the Trump presidency. The two excerpts from HFF both celebrate increased diversity in Hollywood and also point to ongoing exclusion and inequality in media. The excerpt from NYT is from a text which challenges gendered norms in who is tasked with doing diversity and equity work in corporate America. Together, these texts suggest a normative platform wherein the rearticulations of *Diversity and Inclusion/Equality* function as a progressive language. But, to reiterate, the vast majority of texts that used this rearticulation did not have a normative or ideological tilt, often simply quoting some whose job title includes a relevant phrase. Overall, the *Diversity and Inclusion/Equality* phrases fairly infrequent in the overall sample, and the relevant texts in the sub-sample rarely are incorporating this phrase into a particular ideological or normative agenda; this is contrast to the first sub-sample of texts which deploy *Diversity of Thought/Viewpoint* rearticulations.

Discussion

The current chapter presents core findings about my dataset, a unique collection of several thousand texts from news media across the political spectrum. These texts from highly-recognized, wide-ranging news media organizations were selected and analyzed with the goal of understanding how diversity discourse in news media relates to racial contestation and the political-ideological culture wars. In American history and contemporary society, the media has been an important site of racial contestation, but there has not been very much sociological research about how the language of "diversity"

and diversity discourse function in news media texts. Therefore, based on a large and comprehensive sample of texts from six news media organizations that use "diversity," "multiculturalism," and related terminology, this chapter presented several core findings. Such findings come from the descriptive statistics, topic models, and exploration of the rearticulation sub-samples. In the future, I plan on developing some of the core findings described here into individual papers.

First, remember that the sampling strategy was designed to identify articles from the news sources for their use of "diversity" and "multiculturalism" (and various related words). While I expected that only a minority of the texts identified by NewsAPI would be selected for their use of the latter term, I was surprised by just how few texts used such language. Only about 4.1% of the total sample used multiculturalism or a similar term, and a substantial number of these texts (about 40%) also used the term diversity, meaning that a very small number of texts exclusively used the language of multiculturalism. Of that 4.1% of the overall sample of texts, several such texts used the term multiculturalism when quoting an individual who worked at an "Office of Diversity and Multiculturalism" or something similar. But, looking more closely at texts from BRT which use the language of multiculturalism suggests a more coherent ideological and normative platform in such discourse. European-focused texts discussed multiculturalism with a clear focus on ethnoracial difference; such discussion generally wasn't celebratory or positive about multiculturalism, but was rooted in normative and ideological beliefs that are resentful towards ethnoracial difference and a globalizing world. This is in contrast to mainstream multiculturalism discourse in the past and the remnants of such discourse today, a generally positive and celebratory language (Kivisto 2012; Hartmann 2015). A

promising direction for future research would be investigating the theme I've found in my sample; just how thoroughly does the keyword "multiculturalism" work as a code for racial difference in ways that signals xenophobic and racist ideologies?

The next set of analyses in my chapter used LDA topic models to explore the topics, themes, and settings where diversity discourse proves relevant in the news media texts. While there are some topic domains that were specific to one news organizations, several were prominent across the whole sample. When comparing the various topic model solutions associated with each of the six news media organizations, Table 4 shows that all or most of the news media organizations discussed politics, colleges, immigration, business, and pop culture in these purposively-sampled texts. As discussed in my genealogical chapter, these topics are important sites of racial contestation and are relevant to diversity discourse in the USA, both historically and today. My findings show that the discussion of such topics in news media texts continues to be a site where diversity discourse proves relevant.

My findings also show that diversity discourse continues to be relevant to how news media texts discuss gender, albeit I see this topic in two sub-topics; one has to do with various gender and sexual identities, while the other has to do with gender in the workplace. As described above, diversity discourse is not only relevant to racial contestation in the USA; "diversity" and related policy is also the primary way that institutional and organizational policy addresses issues of patriarchy and gender inequality. Then, I found that explicit discussion of racial identity was not as prevalent as we may expect in these texts, as only two news media organizations had a *Racial Identity and Difference* topic in their solution. But, this is likely a product of colorblind norms in

the USA. Overall, this finding does not invalidate the general takeaway that diversity discourse features in these news media texts' coverage of other topics which are important sites of racial contestation.

One new direction my findings uncover is an empirical look at how the two most conservative news organizations, BRT and FOX, deploy diversity discourse in news media texts that have to with the tech industry. A common theme in such texts was how Facebook, Google, and Twitter have banned prominent (and bigoted) conservative pundits, as well as taken steps to curb fake news websites and conspiracy theories. Within such texts, I noticed a strong normative theme of argumentation that draws on the tenets of diversity discourse, such as celebrating difference, to make the case that conservatism is under attack in the digital world. This relates to my exploration of *Diversity of Thought/Viewpoint* rearticulations in the text. At the current time, social media and other parts of the tech industry has become a prominent conservative target, particularly after Donald Trump was officially banned from Twitter, and after such platforms took greater steps to ban explicitly bigoted content. Thus, in the near future, we should expect that the tech industry will continue to be an important arena for racial contestation and the political-ideological dimensions of the culture wars. Furthermore, within such conversations, we can expect that diversity discourse will prove relevant to the debate.

In my genealogical chapter, I discussed two new trends in diversity discourse and rearticulations, i.e., "Diversity of Thought" and similar phrases versus "Diversity and Equity" and similar phrases. My analysis has provided a unique quantification of these two substantively opposed rearticulations of diversity, showing that they are indeed still nascent and small rearticulations that appeared in very a small proportion of the overall

sample. Out of the 8,000+ texts, a small handful proved relevant; 193 texts qualified for the *Diversity of Thought/Viewpoint* sub-sample, and 372 texts qualified for the *Diversity and Equity* sub-sample. For the time being, at least in the news media texts I studied here, the phrases associated with these rearticulations are not major dimensions to diversity discourse today.

My qualitative exploration of the rearticulation sub-samples shows that these rearticulations proved more pertinent to some topic domains than others. Colleges and the tech industry proved particularly relevant to both sub-samples, more so than some of the other topics identified with LDA models in the overall sample. One of the original goals of this project was challenging Right-wing usage of "diversity of thought" arguments. It should come as no surprise that my qualitative analysis shows that diversity-of-thought rearticulations are clearly and consistently being used by the political Right to pursue a particular ideological agenda, one that falls in line with contemporary conservatism and the Republican party. Breitbart texts and conservatives in general may valorize "diversity of thought," but the only thoughts they actually care about are their own; there is no diversity in the thoughts, opinions, or viewpoints that such actors seek to legitimize. Then, what is also concerning is that the other set of rearticulations, such as "Diversity and Equity," seems to be used in a manner that is fairly perfunctory and in passing. Several news media organizations' texts quoted an individual or business employee who worked for an "Office of Diversity and Equity," but most texts themselves did not greatly engage with a normative or ideological worldview that promotes a critical, anti-racist agenda. But, I did see such themes in a few texts, for which I provided relevant excerpts. As these rearticulations become more common in the near-future I believe it will be

important for critical scholars and activists alike to find ways to foster a more progressive, justice-oriented ethos to both "Diversity of Thought" and "Diversity and Equity" rearticulations; I return to this in my concluding chapter.

As discussed above, there are several directions I could take to expand the platform built here. One idea I have in mind is structural topic modeling. The topic models presented above and the related findings come from LDA topic modeling, which is an unstructured method. Structured topic modeling is based off the same principles and goals as LDA, but such analysis can include document metadata as covariates in the analysis. One way I could use structural topic models would be to rerun the analyses above with article publication date as a covariate. Since various stories come and go across the news cycle, article date could help more clearly identify different topics and which topics are prevalent across which documents.

Then, another direction to explore further is using tf-idf weights (term-frequency inverse-document-frequency). Tf-idf weights can differentiate between texts which simply mention the word "diversity" once or twice versus texts which discuss "diversity" a great deal. Applying these weights to topic models findings could do more to tell us about the topic domains and themes that are more connected to the keyword "diversity." The solutions would probably be similar to the baseline LDA models presented in this chapter, but the tf-idf weights could inform a potential conclusion such as, "Immigration, Politics, and Pop Culture, are three prevalent topics in the corpus, but the tf-idf weights show that the utilization and deployment of the keyword *diversity* is most associated with Immigration topics." Similarly, tf-idf weights could also do more to identify the themes and news stories that are most related to the rearticulations, and identify texts that have

more substantive weight versus those that simply mention one of the rearticulation-phrases in passing.

Such directions could be illustrative, but these further analyses would probably just corroborate the core of what I've found in this chapter, as these more complicated textual analysis tools would still be built of the basic core findings. First, while the sample was built by selecting all articles from the six news media organizations within the specified time window that used the langue of "diversity" and "multiculturalism," the latter term proved much less prevalent. Second, the topic models showed that across the six news media organizations, the language of diversity is used in some topics which appear consistently across the various corpuses; notably, such topics are both relevant to social conversations about "diversity" and broader racial contestation and the political-ideological dimensions of the culture wars. Third and finally, my analysis shows that the rearticulations discussed in my genealogical chapter are not greatly prevalent in the corpuses, at least not in a quantitative sense. But, deeper exploration shows that there is a clear normative and ideological tilt to the *Diversity of Thought* rearticulations, particularly when examining their usage in the BRT texts. Providing an empirical look and a critical interrogation of how such rearticulations function to pursue conservative beliefs and uphold racial hierarchies was one of the motivating underpinnings of this chapter, and this dissertation as whole. My analysis also shows that while *Diversity and Inclusion* rearticulations can have a progressive normative agenda, such rearticulations are more frequently used in passing and have less ideological coherence. Essentially, of the two strands of diversity rearticulations in our current cultural moment, the more-

conservative and reactionary *Diversity of Thought* is used in a more coordinated and unified manner in pursuit of certain ideological agendas.

In American history, media has been an important social institution and battleground for racial contestation and the general push for equality among a variety of marginalized groups (Omi and Winant 2015; Lindner and Barnard 2020). Racial projects that uphold racial despotism have used media images and media content to perpetuate racist images, some of which were instrumental to fostering the neoliberal turn and related policy (Gilens 1999; Mendelberg 2001; Haney Lopez 2014). At the same time, challenging racial hierarchy and racist media content has been the goal of various racial projects that pursue racial democracy, a trend which continues today (Yuen 2017; Chattoo 2018). In the twenty-first century, media continues to be highly relevant to racial contestation (Smith and Thakore 2016), yet there is relatively little sociological research about diversity discourse in American media. Thus, in the context of the project as a whole and with attention to racial contestation in the USA, this chapter has explored core findings about a large, unique dataset of politically-varied news media texts that deploy language of "diversity" and "multiculturalism."

Conclusion

The word "diversity" can mean virtually anything in American culture, as this term can refer to any number of personal or social differences in contemporary society. Nevertheless, this dissertation has illustrated that the keyword "diversity" is of particular importance to racial difference in the USA. My mixed-methods project has illustrated how diversity discourse has a mutually constitutive relationship with racial contestation and the culture wars in the USA. Drawing on critical race theory's fundamental mission of illustrating and challenging racial hierarchy in our social world, I have explored the nature, functions, and consequences of American diversity discourse from a genealogical perspective, and the various analyses presented this project are both historical and forward-facing. This project has also provided an opportunity to put forward my theory of "racialized keywords," a synthesis of critical race theory, racial formation theory, and discourse theory. In this concluding section, I briefly restate the main findings and their implications described in the earlier chapters.

The first substantive chapter of the project presents a genealogy of the diversity as a racialized keyword in the context of three historical periods of racial formation from the civil rights movement to today. A series of historical factors in this time period drove the popularization of the keyword diversity and the growth of what we know as contemporary mainstream diversity discourse. The political-ideological landscape engendered by the Southern Strategy and solidified during the Neoliberal Turn led to new racial meanings and related discourses in the USA, among which was a fervor of anti-affirmative-action messages primarily driven by Republican politicians and pundits. This

led to litigation and the Supreme Court case *Bakke*, which legitimized race-conscious policies in hiring and admissions under the mantra of pursuing diversity. This led to a foundational shift in language in law and State policy, soon followed by changes in how businesses and colleges branded their own policies. Additionally, the language of diversity built on earlier frameworks of multiculturalism, and the keyword diversity also worked within new social theories and social conversations about a USA experiencing rising immigration and a population which no longer fell neatly onto a black-white binary. The keyword thusly grew over time. Today, from billion-dollar companies to everyday persons, Americans celebrate and cherish diversity, but diversity is also understood as something that should be beneficial. By the turn of the twenty-first century and onwards, a mainstream diversity discourse has been virtually hegemonic in the USA.

Mainstream diversity discourse has been the subject of much scholarly inquiry, both within and outside the field of sociology. Authors have found that Americans celebrate diversity and use this language to speak favorably about racial difference and racial others. But, authors drawing on critical race theory have shown the shortcomings and problematic aspects of diversity discourse, such of reifying post-racial beliefs and centering whiteness; much of this is driven by the definitional flexibility and hyper-inclusive nature of the vague but recognizable keyword diversity. Within the sociological literature, a relatively recent direction has been to characterize American beliefs and understandings of diversity as a "diversity ideology," based on the hegemonic and widespread nature of a mainstream diversity discourse which can celebrate racial difference yet uphold racial hierarchy. My analysis suggests, by contrast, that mainstream diversity discourse's widespread nature should not be interpreted as a sign that American

understandings of diversity are monolithic or uniform. As I describe in the latter part of my genealogical chapter, the future of diversity discourse is more complicated than that.

I described new directions that sociology will have to consider for the functions, discourses and ideological implications of diversity in the future. This includes new attention to diversity in the media, and considering how diversity discourse relates to the ways American communities and individuals react to a changing population. Additionally, this chapter describes two rearticulations of diversity discourse which can function in opposing ways. The phrase "diversity and equity" can work to draw attention to inequality and justice within the diversity mantra, but the phrase "diversity of thought" can work in ways that actually reify racial hierarchy and patriarchy. There is certainly some warrant to theorizing how diversity is constitutive of a mainstream ideology within everyday culture and institutional practice, but I caution sociologists from only focusing the mainstream ways Americans think and talk about diversity. Ultimately, there are fringe directions and rearticulations to consider which make the picture more complex.

In my next substantive chapter, I analyzed nationally representative survey data to illustrate how Americans think about the concept of diversity. This chapter also explores the implications of diversity discourse for racial contestation and the political-ideological dimensions of the culture wars. Findings show that Americans are generally very favorable and positive towards diversity. Furthermore, this is a fairly widespread phenomenon; my findings show that Americans of different racial identities have fairly similar attitudes and favorability towards the idea of diversity. Then, while education and political ideology prove significant predictors of diversity attitudes, the analysis reveals that Americans with wildly different education levels and political beliefs still have

similarly favorable views about diversity. Notably, findings also showed that how Americans define diversity is actually not very important to their diversity attitudes, net of controls. Thus, even though diversity discourse can be vague and confusing, but the popularity of diversity is very widespread; critical race theorists have interrogated the shortcomings of diversity discourse, but everyday Americans seem to parrot the positivity and cheery nature of mainstream diversity discourse

This chapter also illustrates that despite vague definitions and inconsistent uses of the word diversity in everyday culture diversity appears to be a well-recognized and distinct concept in the American imagination; attitudes about diversity are not simply reflections of attitude towards other concepts, meaning that diversity is a coherent, distinct concept and is not just seen as a proxy. Further exploration showed that diversity attitudes could be considered a distinct set of racial attitudes, as they are clearly distinct from other racial attitude such as prejudice and colorblind racism. Finally, my analysis shows that diversity attitudes may be widespread and popular, but they do not necessarily override one's deeper political or ideological beliefs. I find that people who are pro-diversity hold more equitable and progressive attitudes towards several other race-related attitudes. But, that progressive edge is tempered; an interaction term between diversity attitudes and political ideology shows that conservatives who are pro-diversity are still more likely to not support affirmative action or immigration. Overall, this chapter illustrates that the ways Americans think about diversity have several implications for the relationship between everyday cultural beliefs and broader patterns of racial contestation in the USA.

The third and final substantive chapter provides a mixed-methods content analysis of diversity discourse in 8,000+ news media texts, with a purposive sampling strategy that includes news media sources from across the political spectrum. Articles were scraped if they used the language of "diversity," "multiculturalism," and related terms over an eighteen-month period from Sept 2017 to March 2019. An initial look shows that barely 4% of the articles that were thusly selected drew on the language of multiculturalism, and many of those that did were articles from Breitbart which did not describe multiculturalism in a celebratory or upbeat manner. Then, based on inductive topic models and supplementary qualitative close-reading, I examined the common topics and themes from texts from different news media organizations. Even though there were some topics which were unique to one or two of the six news organizations, I found some consistent topics across texts from all six news organizations, such as politics, education, business, and immigration. Notably, these topic domains and related settings have historically been important to the rise of diversity discourse in the USA, as well as broader racial contestation and the culture wars. Overall, the topic models show us that the keyword diversity and diversity discourse in American news media today continues to prove relevant to topic domains where it has historically been shaped by racial contestation in the USA.

Then, this chapter provides an illustration and exploration of the deployment of two contrasting sets of rearticulations of diversity discourse, "diversity and equity" and "diversity of thought." A brief quantitative overview shows that very, very few texts from the total sample used one of the relevant phrases, suggesting that these rearticulations are not yet major dimensions of diversity discourse in the USA. Qualitative close-reading

illustrates that despite their relatively low frequency of occurrence, the rearticulations have important ideological characteristics. For the most part, "diversity and equity" rearticulations are used in passing and without a clear normative bent, but there are some instances where this phrase is used in ways that promote equity and challenge marginalization. The "diversity of thought" rearticulations primarily were deployed in politically conservative platforms, often used as a tool for arguing for increased representation and power for conservatives in colleges, businesses, and the tech industry. These rearticulations each draw on the premise that diversity is good, but they do differ significantly from mainstream diversity discourse. Overall, this chapter shows how diversity discourse in news media today is intertwined with topics, themes, and normative ideas that are important for race and political-ideological clashes in the USA.

Through my mixed-methods analysis, I have provided several illustrations of how the racialized keyword diversity is implicated in racial contestation, both historically and contemporarily. I believe this theoretical framework is better suited to understanding the meanings, frameworks, and implications of how Americans think and talk about diversity than the conceptualization of "the diversity ideology," as I have considered for both mainstream and fringe diversity discourses rather than wholly focusing on the mainstream. From its inception, a goal of this project is to bring a critical race theory analysis to understanding new rearticulations of diversity discourse, which build on the existing tenets of diversity in new ways. From a critical perspective, my findings should be concerning. My analyses of "Diversity and Inclusion", "Diversity and Equity," etc. in the genealogical chapter highlights that these more-progressive rearticulations have begun to grow in the same social institutions---corporations and colleges—where equity

policy and diversity policy were first pioneered. The concerning aspect is that the content analysis chapter found relatively few instances of these phrases being used in ways that normatively and ideologically spoke to pursuing equity and justice. Thus, rebranding is occurring in colleges and corporations, but it remains to be seen how phrases such as "diversity and equity" will actually factor into conversations about marginalization and hierarchy.

Then, even more concerning are my findings regarding right-leaning rearticulations of diversity discourse such as "diversity of thought." My genealogical chapter described how political-ideological dimensions of the culture wars have been shaped by a GOP which has built a voter base by appealing to white racial resentments since the Civil Rights era. The Southern Strategy and Neoliberal Turn have culminated into a new era of Racial NeoPopulism today, wherein the GOP now uses unabashed appeals to white populist, patriarchal, and nativist sentiments. In this time, rearticulations such as diversity of thought often work in pursuit of contemporary conservative goals and platforms. In my survey chapter, I found that conservatives are surprisingly positive towards diversity, only slightly less so than liberals. But, my genealogical chapter suggests that the kind of diversity conservatives care about is much different than liberals. Now, viewpoint diversity and diversity of thought work as conservative clarion calls wherein the celebration of diversity is just a thin veneer for their ideological goal of promoting racist, sexist, and homophobic views as legitimate and worth opinions. The genealogical chapter illustrates the coordinated ideological and political mission to use such rearticulations for the purpose of promoting far-Right views and claiming that conservatives are oppressed; this attack strategy is targeted towards colleges,

corporations, and the tech industry. Note that despite all their talk about diversity of thought, far-Right pundits and politicians only care about one set of thoughts: their own. To be tongue-in-cheek, there is no diversity of thought within conservative deployment of diversity-of-thought rearticulations.

This project has also put forward a theory of racialized keywords, based on synthesizing racial formation theory by Omi and Winant and discourse theory by Laclau and Mouffe. This theory considers how processes of *racial formation* and the *trajectory of racial politics* shape the meanings associated with certain *signs* and the *discourses* that come with. Through a series of ideologically-opposed *antagonisms* and *articulations*, the *signifying chains* of signs and meanings associated with certain *floating signifiers* change. Some meanings and discourses associated with specific signs and keywords become stronger and more commonly-understood discourses, a.k.a *sedimented discourses*. But, no such discourses are ever permanent or immutable; based on poststructuralist thought and social constructionist perspectives, my theory of racialized keywords is designed to consider how meanings, discourses, and know ledges change in social contexts over time. In future work, I would like to expand this theoretical perspective to other racialized keywords which have had important consequences for racial contestation and the culture wars; possibilities include "welfare," "crime," and "affirmative action." From an intersectional perspective, this theory could apply to how certain keywords such as "abortion" or "welfare queen" work in ways that are relevant to race, gender, and other marginalized identities. In general, I believe that this theory has the ability to develop and synthesize other theories and scholarly perspectives regarding race, signs, and discourses; examples include Gilens' "racial codes" or Haney-Lopez's "dog-whistles."

Looking ahead, diversity discourse is thusly poised to shape racial contestation and political-ideological culture wars in many ways. Mainstream diversity discourse, which functions as the bedrock of the diversity ideology, can work in ways that celebrates racial difference yet also obfuscate racial inequality and hierarchy. New rearticulations of this racialized keyword build on the tenets of existing diversity discourse in contrasting ways; while some rearticulations hold potential for challenging racial hierarchy, others are actively and concurrently being used in ways that uphold racial hierarchy. My mixed-methods analysis has suggested several future directions for research about how diversity discourse, and other discourses built on racialized keywords, can uphold racial hierarchy amidst rising racial difference in the USA.

Figures and Tables

Diversity Attitudes in the USA: Figures and Tables

Table 1

Response Favorability (Agreement)	Value Racial Diversity	Diversity Statement* (Transformed)	American Diversity a Strength	Teach Religious Diversity	Teach Racial Diversity	Diversity in My Town	Diversity in My Social Circle
1	3.31	8.35	3.51	9.35	4.34	6.55	10.36
2	7.38	11.6	6.76	19.31	12.43	24.6	35.92
3	30.95	5.82	38.8	47.36	45.89	44.05	39.79
4	58.36	74.23	20.61	23.99	37.34	24.8	13.93
5	--	--	30.33	--	--	--	--
Sample Size	2507	2456	2479	2439	2445	2427	2443

Table 1a

Original Diversity Statements	Percent	Cum.
1. It makes life more interesting	10.24	10.24
2. It helps us learn tolerance	7.77	18.01
3. It makes us who we are as a nation	26.93	44.94
4. It brings different perspectives, which can help us solve problems	27.26	72.2
5. It can be uncomfortable or disorienting to deal with diversity	3.18	75.38
6. It can lead to intolerance	2.31	77.69
7. It can create division and conflict	10.78	88.48
8. It can make it difficult for us to g	5.25	93.73
9. Something else	6.27	100
[Sample Size: 2456]	100	100

Table 1b

Sum Stats, Diversity Items	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
ValueRacia~v	2,507	3.443558	0.770248	1	4
AmDivStrWk	2,479	3.711577	1.079708	1	5
DivStatement	2,456	3.459283	0.990778	1	4

TeachRelig~v	2,439	2.859779	0.88744	1	4
TeachRaceDiv	2,445	3.162372	0.803159	1	4
DivTown	2,427	2.871034	0.860087	1	4
DivFriends	2,433	2.572955	0.854867	1	4

Figure 1

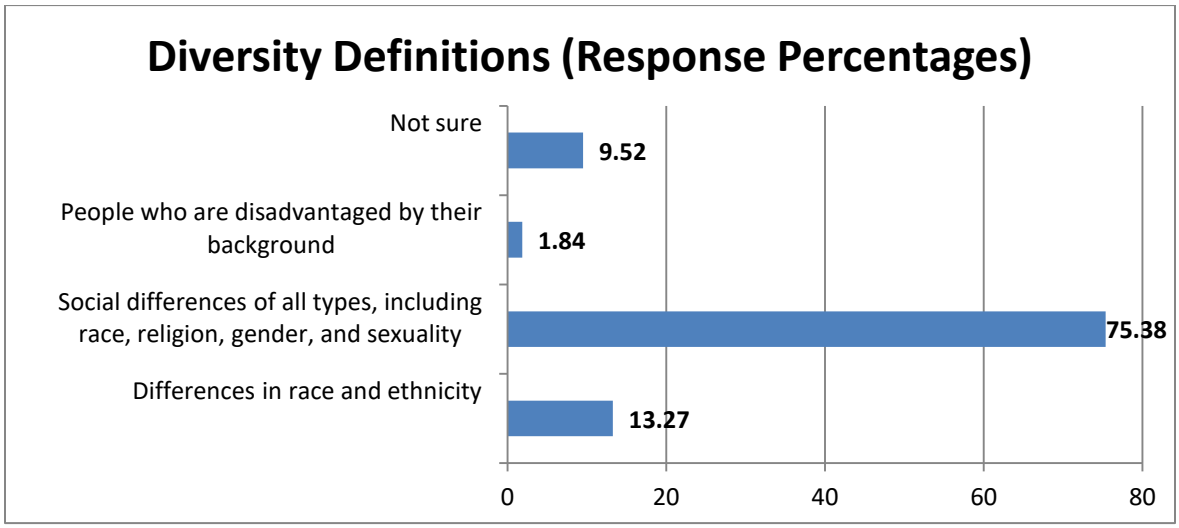


Figure 2

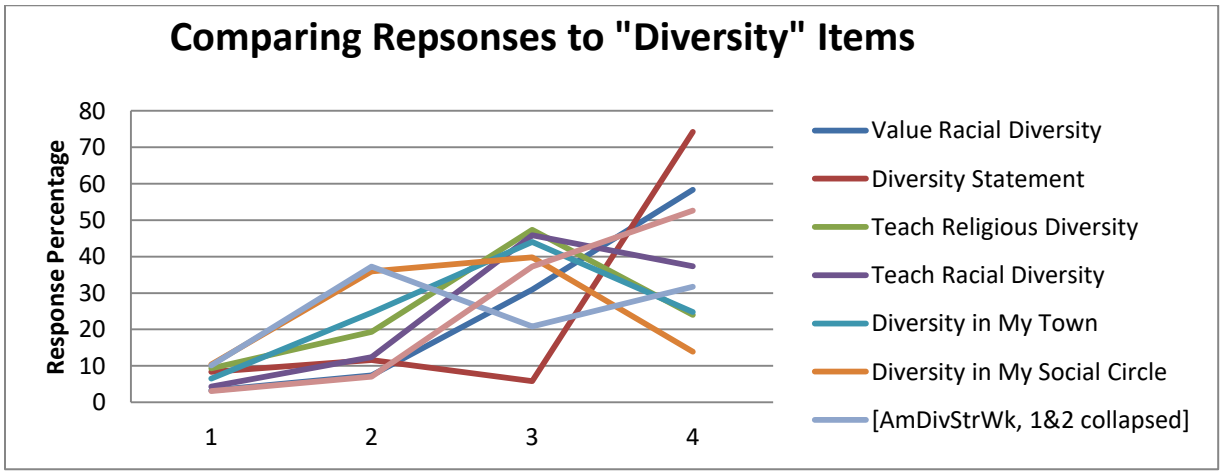


Table 2

Regressions, "Diversity" Items	***Is it Important to Value Racial Diversity***		***Is American Diversity a Strength?***		***Diversity Statement* [higher values = More Positive]**		***Should Schools Teach about Religious Diversity?***		***Should Schools Teach about Racial Diversity?***		***Does your city or town have a lot of diversity?***		***Does your social circle have a lot of diversity?***	
Race *(White = referent)*	Coef.	Robust St Error	Coef.	Robust St Error	Coef.	Robust St Error	Coef.	Robust St Error	Coef.	Robust St Error	Coef.	Robust St Error	Coef.	Robust St Error
Black, Non-Hispanic	0.023	(-0.166)	-0.301	(0.14)	-0.186	(0.174)	0.301	(0.154)	0.052	(0.158)	-0.387*	(0.158)	0.076	(0.162)
Other, Non-Hispanic	0.311	(0.301)	0.789**	(0.289)	0.35	(0.411)	0.029	(0.254)	0.057	(0.285)	0.177	(0.291)	0.511	(0.225)
Hispanic	-0.038	(0.161)	0.297	(0.146)	0.346	(0.185)	-0.185	(0.172)	-0.081	(0.164)	0.142	(0.157)	**0.501****	(0.163)
2+ Races, Non-	0.22	(0.393)	0.31	(0.394)	0.18	(0.442)	-0.277	(0.383)	0.654	(0.335)	-0.02	(0.437)	0.881	(0.

Hispanic														466)
Other Demographics														
Gender (*Man* =1)	**-0.426*** **	(0.100)	0.088	(0.092)	-0.208	(0.113)	-0.141	(0.094)	-0.253**	(0.096)	0.179	(0.094)	0.11	(0.094)
LGBTQ identity (*Yes* =1)	-0.182	(0.219)	0.282	(0.195)	-0.643**	(0.231)	0.057	(0.222)	0.348	(0.232)	-0.078	(0.228)	0.206	(0.219)
Education (4 categories)	0.134*	(0.055)	**0.314*** **	(0.052)	**0.353*** **	(0.066)	0.03	(0.052)	**0.241*** **	(0.051)	0.044	(0.053)	0.129*	(0.052)
Income (7 categories)	0.047	(0.030)	0.041	(0.028)	0.001	(0.035)	-0.044	(0.029)	0.033	(0.029)	0.012	(0.031)	0.004	(0.028)
Political Liberalism	**0.209*** **	(0.024)	**0.19*** **	(0.025)	**0.163*** **	(0.028)	-0.076**	(0.025)	**0.139*** **	(0.025)	-0.012	(0.023)	0.046	(0.024)
County-Context														

Items *[Standardized Scores]*														
County Population	-0.069	(0.066)	-0.003	(0.051)	0.034	(0.067)	-0.054	(0.051)	-0.068	(0.046)	-0.084	(0.054)	-0.005	(0.063)
County Median Income	0.014	(0.054)	-0.013	(0.051)	0.009	(0.056)	-0.031	(0.054)	-0.063	(0.056)	**0.185*** **	(0.053)	0.069	(0.05)
County Nonwhite Rate	0.104	(0.060)	0.047	(0.059)	0.031	(0.065)	0.051	(0.058)	0.043	(0.063)	**0.623*** **	(0.065)	**0.398*** **	(0.063)
Constant (Cut 1)	-2.207	(0.239)	-1.518	(0.23)	-0.902	(0.239)	-2.73	(0.21)	-1.85	(0.22)	-2.532	(0.209)	-1.507	(0.212)
Cut 2	-0.91	(0.214)	-0.34	(0.2)	0.225	(0.235)	-1.395	(0.204)	-0.278	(0.2)	-0.635	(0.197)	0.611	(0.199)
Cut 3	0.989	(0.208)	1.911	(0.202)	0.581	(0.237)	0.682	(0.204)	1.878	(0.207)	1.455	(0.199)	2.673	(0.2

														1)
Cut 4	---		2.845	(0.208)	---				---		---		---	
Sample Size	2,489		2,465		2,440		2,426		2,432		2,414		2,420	
Log Likelihood	-2413.492		-3200.3246		-2078.6041		-2960.7976		-2680.5908		-2835.1748		-2887.7382	
Wald Chi^2 (*df = 12*)	117.39		136.69		84.17		24.62		90.42		157.69		116.68	
Pseudo-R^2	.0355		.0343		.0303		0.0058		0.0232		0.0444		0.0343	

Table 3

Polychorric Correlation Matrix of Seven Diversity Items	***Is it Important to Value Racial Diversity***	***Is American Diversity a Strength?***	***Diversity Statements***	***Should Schools Teach about Religious Diversity?***	***Should Schools Teach about Racial Diversity?***	***Does your city or town have a lot of diversity?***	***Does your social circle have a lot of diversity?***
Is it Important to Value Racial Diversity	1						
Is American Diversity a Strength?	0.392935	1					
Diversity Statements	0.349698	0.556911	1				
Should Schools Teach about Religious Diversity?	0.186485	0.030015	0.044978	1			
Should Schools Teach about Racial Diversity?	0.440405	0.265696	0.253484	0.419692	1		
Does your city or town have a lot of diversity?	0.101314	0.094618	0.009156	0.045311	0.077076	1	
Does your social circle have a lot of diversity?	0.27882	0.194281	0.184389	0.15052	0.191483	0.557801	1

Table 4

Seven Diversity Items: Exploratory Factor Solution	Eigenvalues	Proportion Explained Variance	Cum. Explained Variance	Rotated Factor Loadings (Oblimin Rotation)		
Factor 1	2.052	0.498	0.498	*Variable*	Factor 1	Factor 2
Factor 2	1.017	0.2467	0.7447	***Is it Important to Value Racial Diversity***	0.4306	0.1683
Factor 3	0.741	0.1798	0.9245	***Is American Diversity a Strength?***	0.7626	0.0998
Factor 4	0.153	0.0371	0.9616	***Diversity Statements***	0.7449	0.0455
Factor 5	0.119	0.029	0.9906	***Should Schools Teach about Religious Diversity?***	0.2411	0.0854
Factor 6	0.039	0.0094	1.0001	***Should Schools Teach about Racial Diversity?***	-0.036	0.0847
Factor 7	-0.00024	-0.0001	1.000	***Does your city or town have a lot of diversity?***	-0.0039	0.7537
Obs = 2359, Chi-Squared = 3547.80*** (df = 21)	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: Coef. of Determination = 0.655, Chi-Sq = 1018.803, df=6, KMO = 0.647			***Does your social circle have a lot of diversity?***	0.1587	0.7945

Table 5

Four Diversity Items: Exploratory Factor Solution	Eigenvalues	Proportion Explained Variance	Cum. Explained Variance	Rotated Factor Loadings (Oblimin Rotation)		
Factor1	1.6645	0.8033	0.8033		Factor1	Factor2
Factor2	0.37951	0.1831	0.9864	*Is it Important to Value Racial Diversity*	0.4331	0.5763
Factor3	0.02838	0.0137	1.0001	*Is American Diversity a*	0.7619	0.1037

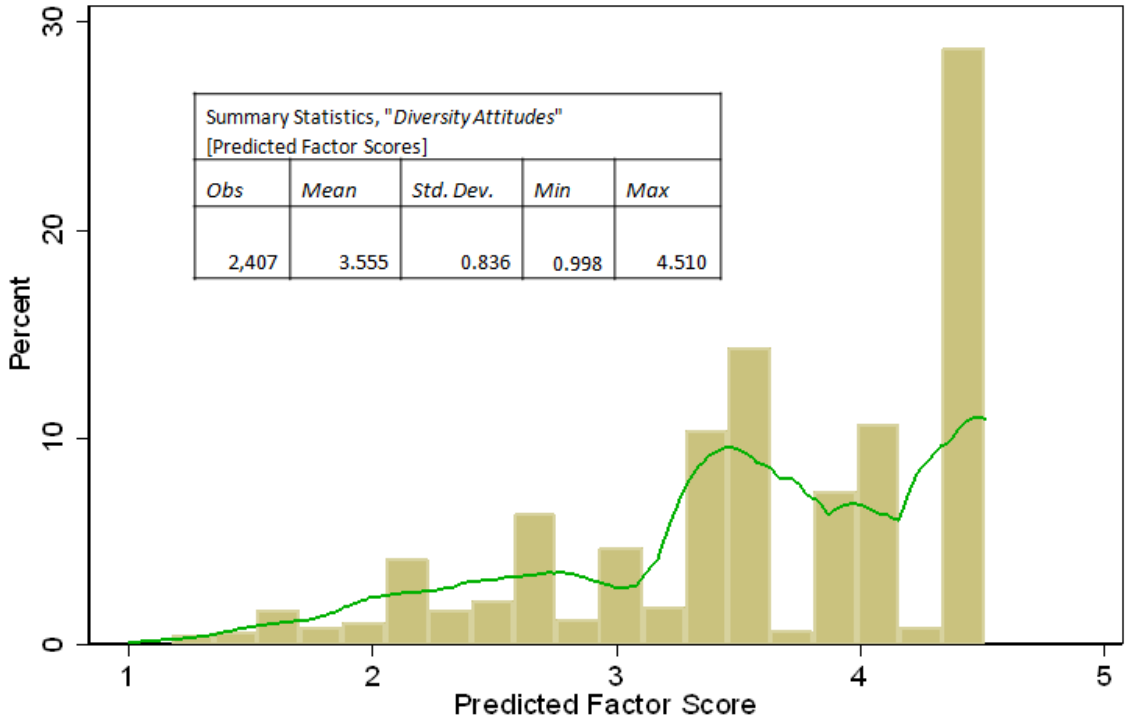
				Strength?		
Factor4	-0.00018	-0.0001	1.0000	*Diversity Statements*	0.7267	0.0791
Obs = 2407; Chi-Squared = 1922.30*** (df =6)	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: Coef of Determination = 0.424, Chi-Sq = 2021.661***, KMO = 0.619			*Should Schools Teach about Racial Diversity?*	0.2706	0.5705

Table 6

Diversity vs Potential Confounders: Factor Analysis Eigenvalues and Exp. Variance								
	Prej		CB		Immig		Multiculturalism	
Bartlett	Coef of Determination = 0.065 Chi-Sq = 6557.83 , df = 36 p < .001 ; KMO = 0.811		Coef of Determination = 0.350, Chi-Sq = 2493.802 , df = 21, p < .001 ; KMO = 0.625		Coef of Determination = 0.386 Chi-Sq = 2243.17 , df = 21, p < .001 ; KMO = 0.661		Coef of Determination = 0.343, Chi-Sq = 2539.261 , df = 28 p < .001 ; KMO = 0.669	
Factor	Eigenvalue	Cum. Explained Variance	Eigenvalue	Cum. Explained Variance	Eigenvalue	Cum. Explained Variance	Eigenvalue	Cum. Explained Variance
Factor 1	3.812	0.621	2.025	0.446	2.096	0.566	2.025	0.446
Factor 2	1.484	0.862	1.744	0.83	1.194	0.888	1.744	0.83
Factor 3	0.385	0.925	0.402	0.919	0.345	0.981	0.402	0.919
Factor 4	0.258	0.967	0.173	0.957	0.047	0.994	0.173	0.957
Factor 5	0.1	0.983	0.157	0.992	0.016	0.998	0.157	0.992
Factor 5	0.067	0.994	0.027	0.998	0.007	1	0.027	0.998
Factor 7	0.022	0.998	0.011	1	0	1	0.011	1
Fa	0.013	1	0	1			0	1

ctor8								
Factor9	0	1						
Sample Size	2407		2381		2359		2380	
Chi-Squared (df in parantheses)	110000*** (36)		4796.04*** (28)		3996.27*** (21)		4794.03*** (28)	

Figure 3



Note: Epanechnikov Kernel Desnsity estimate overlayed.

Table 7

Regression of "Diversity Attitudes" [Predicted Factor Scores] upon Demographics	
	Coefficient (Robust Std Error in parentheses)
Race *(White = referent*)	
Black, Non-Hispanic	-0.088 (0.063)
Other, Non-Hispanic	0.236* (0.108)
Hispanic	0.151* (0.064)
2+ Races, Non-Hispanic	0.118 (0.145)
Other Demographics	
Gender (*Man* =1)	-0.023 (0.041)
LGBTQ identity (*Yes* =1)	-0.056 (0.089)
Education (4 categories)	0.163*** (0.023)
Income (7 categories)	0.009 (0.012)
Political Liberalism	0.087*** (0.011)
County-Context Items *[Standardized Scores]*	
County Population	0.005 (0.019)
County Median Income	-0.001 (0.021)
County Nonwhite Rate	0.023 (0.024)
Constant	2.682 (0.088)
Sample Size	2394
F-Score (degrees freedom)	13.97*** (df =12)
R^2	0.0953
Root MSE	0.798

Table 7a

Diversity Attitudes as Predicted By County-Level Factors	Coef.	Robst St. Err.
CountyPopZ	0.01	0.02
CountyMedianIncZ	0.03	0.02
CountyNonWhitePropZ	0.07	0.02
_cons	3.56	0.02
Sample Size: 2399	F (3) = 5**	R^2= .0095
Root MSE = 0.83315		

Table 7b

Oneway ANOVA, Diversity Attitudes & Race				
Participant Race	Mean	Std. Dev.	Freq.	
White,	3.538671	0.854643	1,504	
Black	3.636995	0.746545	398	
Other	3.832562	0.776704	63	
Hispanic	3.705836	0.756007	397	
2+ Races	3.75656	0.769757	45	
Total	3.594266	0.821561	2,407	
Source	SS	df	MS	F
Between groups	15.07982	4	3.769955	5.63***
Within groups	1608.879	2402	0.669808	
Total	1623.959	2406	0.674962	

Bartlett's Test for Equal Variance: Chi-Squared = 17.4318**

Figure 4

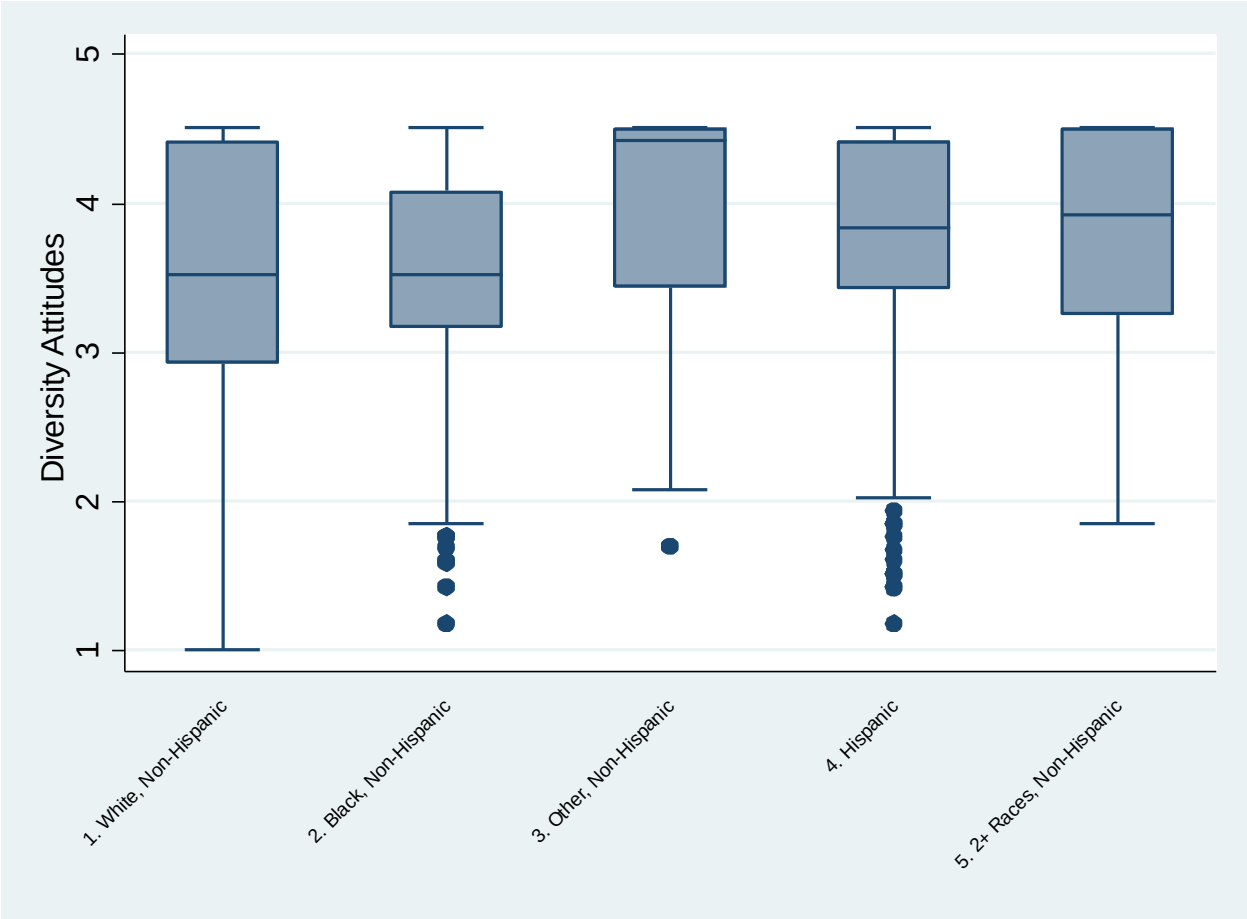


Figure 5

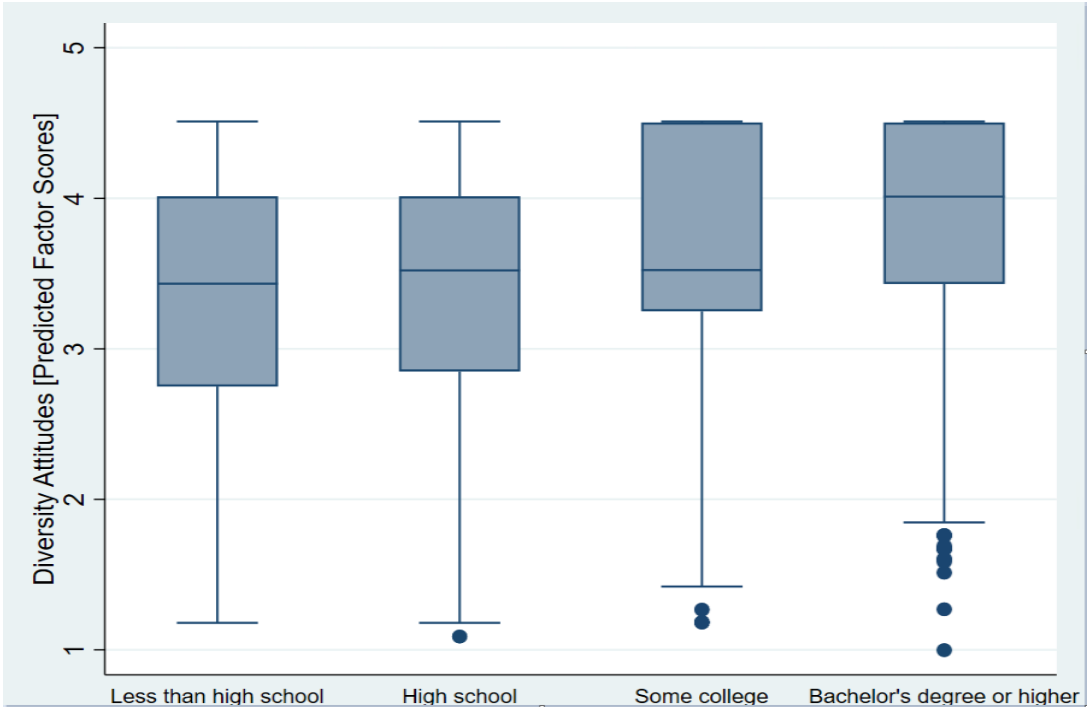

Diversity Attitudes [Predicted Factor Scores]
1
2
3
4
5
Less than high school
High school
Some college
Bachelor's degree or higher

Table 8

Predicting Diversity Definitions	*Diversity as Racial*		*Diversity as Inclusive*		*Diversity as Disadvantage*		*Unsure Diversity Definition*	
Race (*White = referent*)	Coef.	Robust St. Error	Coef	Robust St. Error	Coef.	Robust St. Error	Coef.	Robust St. Error
Black, Non-Hispanic	0.37	0.235	-0.932****	0.174	1.241**	0.389	1.093***	0.254
Other, Non-Hispanic	0.707	0.373	-0.835*	0.326	1.449	0.768	0.254	0.648
Hispanic	0.57*	0.223	-0.873***	0.173	0.522	0.409	0.902***	0.25
2+ Races, Non-Hispanic	0.542	0.467	-0.423	0.4	0	(empty)	0.244	0.513
Other Demographics								
Gender (*Man* =1)	0.076	0.154	-0.264*	0.123	0.507	0.417	0.382*	0.18
LGBTQ identity (*Yes* =1)	-0.076	0.411	0.097	0.306	0.518	0.511	-0.327	0.409
Education (4 categories)	-0.033	0.094	0.221**	0.s07	-0.029	0.215	-0.439***	0.101
Income (7 categories)	0.037	0.047	0.122***	0.037	-0.242	0.15	-0.289***	0.056
Conservatism	0.152***	0.04	-0.146***	0.033	0.116	0.101	0.084	0.048
Constant	-2.762	0.345	1.085***	0.252	-4.209	0.605	-1.069***	0.364
Sample Size	2,469		2,469		2,424		2,469	
Log-pseudolikelihood	-936.6827		-1284.853		-211.908		-670.17836	
Pseudo-R^2	0.021		0.058		0.0553		0.1233	
Chi-Squared (*df*=9)	25.06***		97.97***		55.97***		113.8***	

Table 9

Predicting Diversity Attitudes Based on Demographics and Diversity Definitions								
	Coefficient		Coefficient		Coefficient		Coefficient	
Race *(White = referent)*								
Black, Non-Hispanic	-0.058	(0.059)	-0.018	0.059	-0.042	0.058	-0.024	0.058
Other, Non-Hispanic	0.276**	(0.107)	0.306**	0.102	0.293**	0.103	0.285	0.104
Hispanic	0.169**	(0.061)	0.207***	0.06	0.17**	0.061	0.199***	0.06
2+ Races, Non-Hispanic	0.145	(0.14)	0.162	0.136	0.135	0.14	0.154	0.139
Other Demographics								
Gender (*Man* =1)	-0.023	(0.041)	-0.014	0.04	-0.02	0.04	-0.018	0.041
LGBTQ identity (*Yes* =1)	-0.031	(0.088)	-0.029	0.085	-0.022	0.088	-0.033	0.088
Education (4 categories)	0.16***	(0.023)	0.151***	0.023	0.16***	0.023	0.148***	0.024
Income (7 categories)	0.01	(0.012	0.005	0.012	0.007	0.012	0.002	0.012
Conservatism	-0.086***	(0.011)	-0.081***	0.01	-0.086***	0.01	-0.085***	0.011
Diversity as Racial	-0.041	(0.069)						
Diversity as Inclusive			0.255***	0.052				
Diversity as Disadvantage					-0.603***	0.136		
Unsure							-0.386***	0.069
Constant	3.381***	(0.087)	3.188***	0.096	3.389***	0.088	3.456***	0.089
Sample Size	2,390		2,390		2,390		2390	
F score (df = 10)	16.1***		19.15***		19.44***		20.82***	
R^2	0.093		0.1088		0.1023		0.1085	
Root MSE	0.79705		0.79021		0.79307		0.79036	

Table 10

Predicting Racial Attitudes	*Prejudice* Coef	St Error	Coef	St Error	*Colorblind Racism* Coef	St Error	Coef	St Error
Diversity Attitudes	-0.234***	0.027	-0.171***	0.053	0.092***	0.025	0.081	0.054
Race *(White = referent*)								
Black, Non-Hispanic	0.1	0.067	0.11	0.07	-0.265***	0.063	-0.266***	0.063
Other, Non-Hispanic	0.157	0.118	0.16	0.12	0.122	0.084	0.121	0.084
Hispanic	-0.072	0.051	-0.07	0.05	0.193**	0.063	0.193**	0.063
2+ Races, Non-Hispanic	0.288	0.187	0.3	0.19	0.038	0.116	0.037	0.116
Other Demographics								
Gender (*Man* =1)	0.076	0.041	0.07	0.04	-0.033	0.037	-0.032	0.037
LGBTQ ID (*Yes* =1)	-0.048	0.084	-0.05	0.08	-0.102	0.092	-0.102	0.092
Education (4 categories)	-0.01	0.021	-0.01	0.02	-0.08***	0.021	-0.079***	0.021
Income (7 categories)	0.005	0.011	0	0.01	-0.025*	0.011	-0.025	0.011
Conservative	0.029**	0.011	0.09*	0.04	0.02*	0.009	0.01	0.046
Interaction Term	--	--	-0.02	0.01	--	--	0.003	0.012
Constant	0.703	0.12	0.48	0.2	-0.062	0.11	-0.023	0.204
Sample Size	2,402		2402		2,399		2,399	
F score (df = 10)	12.8***		11.65***		8.76***		8.02***	

R^2	0.0793		0.080		0.0552		0.0552	
Root MSE	0.7763		0.776		0.73494		0.73507	

Figure 6

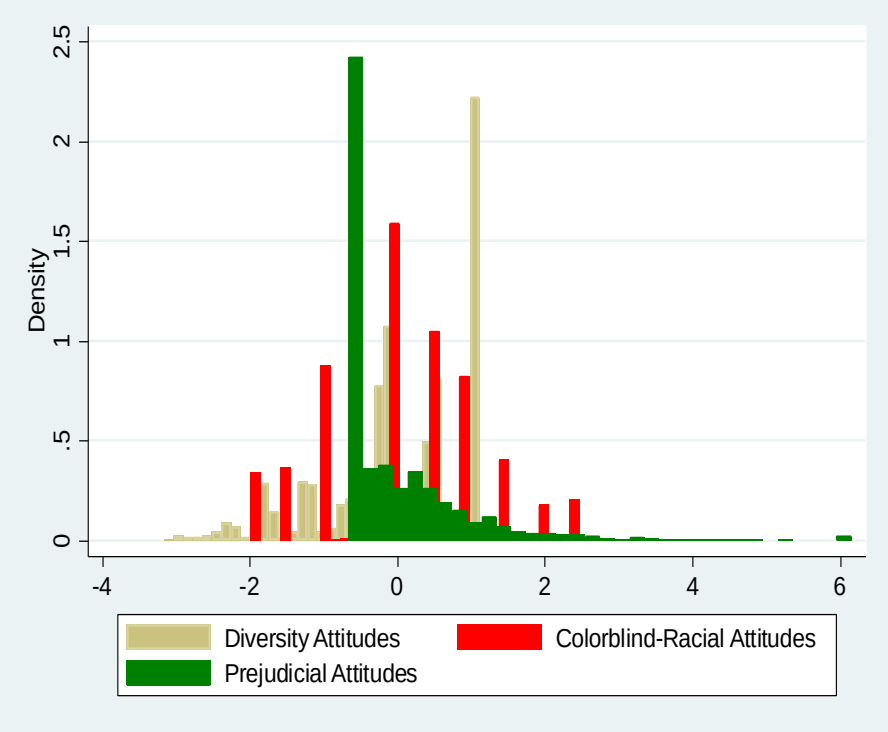


Figure 7

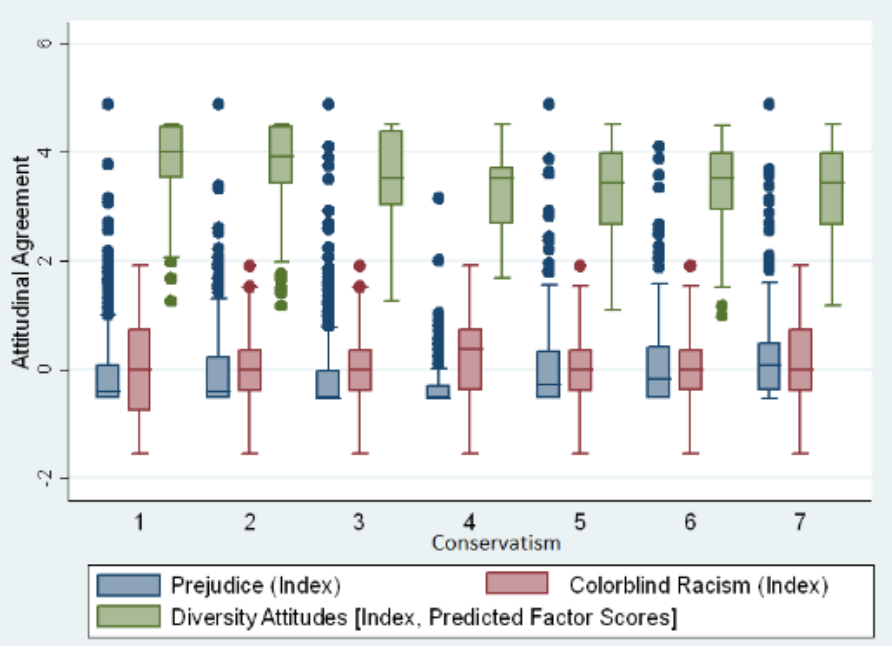
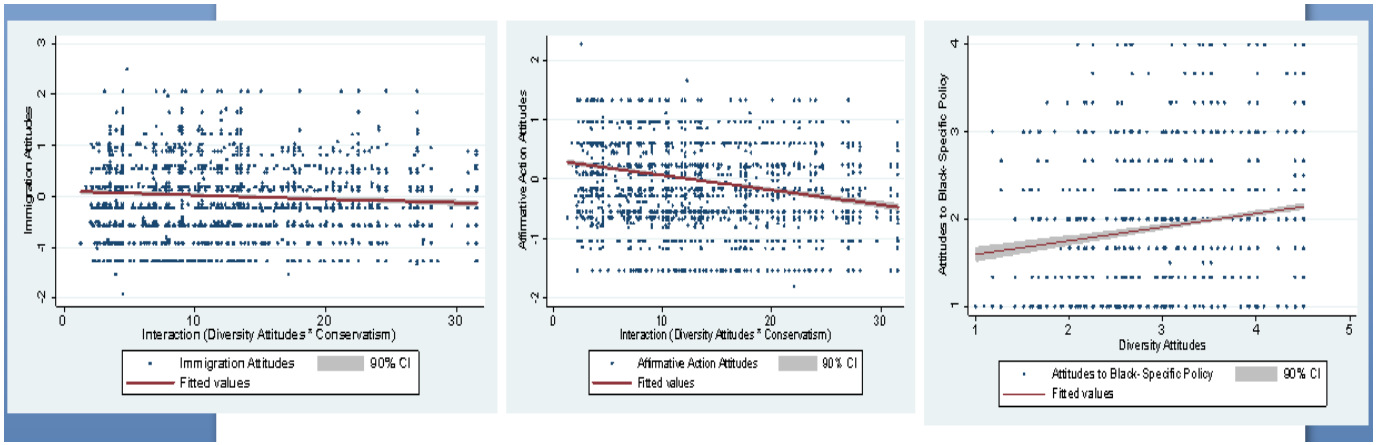


Table 11

Predicting Policy Attitudes	Immigration Attitudes [Index]				Affirmative Action & Anti-Discrimination-Law Attitudes (Index)				Black-Specific Policy Attitudes [Index]			
Race *(White = referent*)												
Black, Non-Hispanic	-0.027	0.061	-0.015	0.06	0.282***	0.047	0.298***	0.046	0.548***	0.064	0.562***	0.064
Other, Non-Hispanic	0.086	0.09	0.098	0.089	0.192*	0.08	0.206*	0.082	0.072	0.099	0.084	0.097
Hispanic	0.265***	0.052	0.263***	0.052	0.209***	0.044	0.207***	0.044	0.168**	0.063	0.165**	0.062
2+ Races, Non-Hispanic	-0.007	0.113	0.011	0.114	0.125	0.124	0.148	0.127	0.204	0.118	0.225	0.116
Other Demographics												
Gender (*Man* =1)	-0.012	0.033	-0.017	0.033	-0.079**	0.03	-0.086**	0.03	z-0.032	0.036	-0.038	0.036
LGBTQ identity (*Yes* =1)	0.158	0.076	0.158*	0.075	0.092	0.075	0.091	0.074	0.194	0.102	0.195	0.102
Education (4 categories)	0.123***	0.018	0.12***	0.018	0.064***	0.017	0.06***	0.017	0.036	0.021	0.033	0.021
Income (7 categories)	0.003	0.01	0.001	0.01	-0.005	0.009	-0.008	0.009	-0.021	0.01	-0.024*	0.01
Conservative	-0.051***	0.008	0.065*	0.032	-0.081***	0.008	0.061	0.034	-0.076***	0.01	0.05	0.041
PrejudiceIndex	-0.218***	0.025	-0.22***	0.025	-0.121***	0.02	-0.124***	0.02	-0.072**	0.025	-0.074**	0.025
ColorblindIndex	-0.051*	0.025	-0.051*	0.024	-0.09***	0.022	-0.09***	0.022	0.088***	0.026	0.088***	0.026
Factor1	0.148***	0.024	0.277***	0.047	0.138***	0.02	0.296***	0.04	0.074**	0.023	0.214***	0.051
Interaction Term	--	--	-0.032***	0.009	--	--	-0.039***	0.04	--	--	-0.035***	0.011

Constant	-0.723	0.099	-1.185	0.167	-0.412	0.09	-0.039	0.009	1.878	0.111	1.378	0.193
Sample Size	2,391		2391		2,390		2390		2,355		2,355	
F score (df = 12or 13)	37.72***		35.76***		39.1***		39.26***		29.0***		29.41***	
R^2	0.2184		0.224		0.2261		0.2351		0.1731		0.1791	
Root MSE	0.64139		0.63919		0.6101		0.60655		0.6975		.69512	

Figure 8



Diversity Discourse in News Media: Figures and Tables

Table 1

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Corpuses & Corpus Texts			
Corpus	Total Texts in Corpus	Mean Words Per Text in Corpus	St. Dev Words Per Text in Corpus
BRT	1443	626.9232915	515.1688
CNN	1661	1158.856111	860.17
FOX	763	771.7640891	569.8096
HFF	1433	1175.905792	1060.897
NYT	2131	1398.206476	1196.223
WSJ	1043	972.3276027	531.3077

Figure 1a and Figure 1b

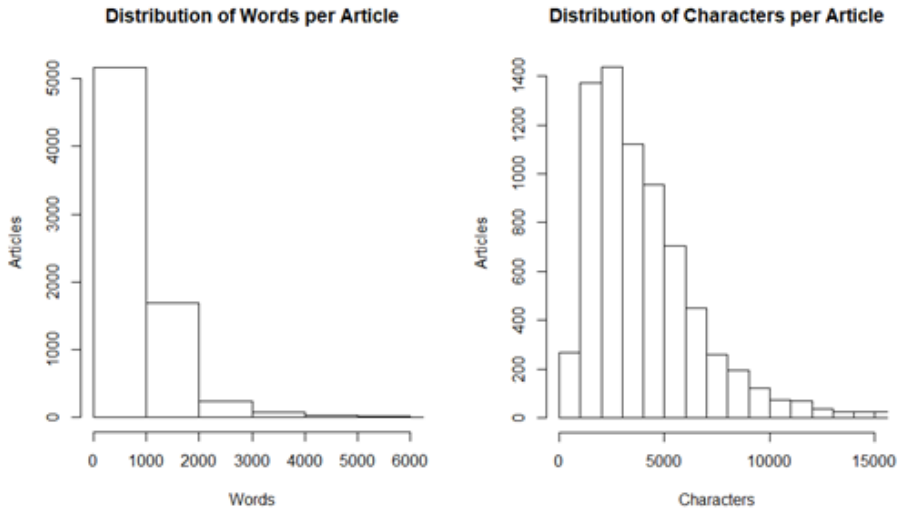
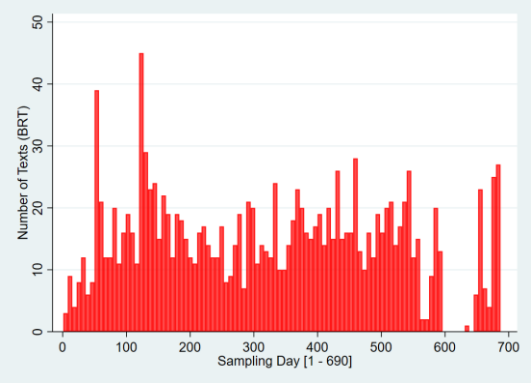


Table 1.5

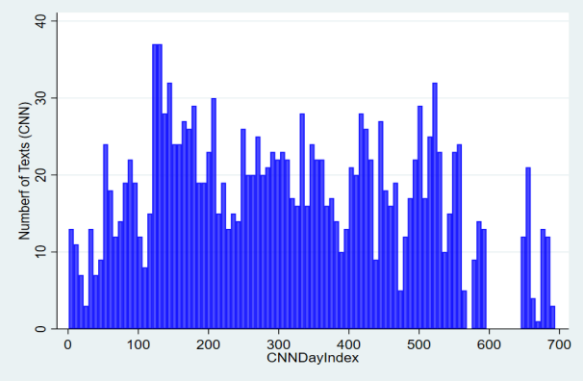
"Multicultural*" in the Data	Total Texts	Frequency	Proportion
BRT	1443	92	0.064
CNN	1661	56	0.034
FOX	763	23	0.030
HFF	1433	54	0.038
NYT	2131	97	0.046
WSJ	1043	25	0.024
Total	**8474**	**347**	**0.041**

Figures 2.a – 2.f: Subsample Frequencies over Time (Day Index)

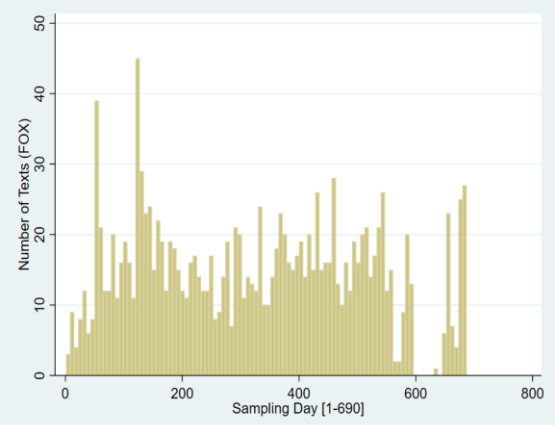
BRT (Fig 2.a)



CNN (Fig 2.b)

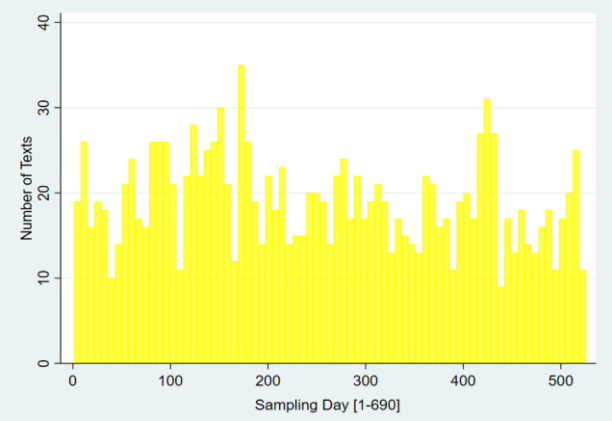


FOX (Fig 2.c)

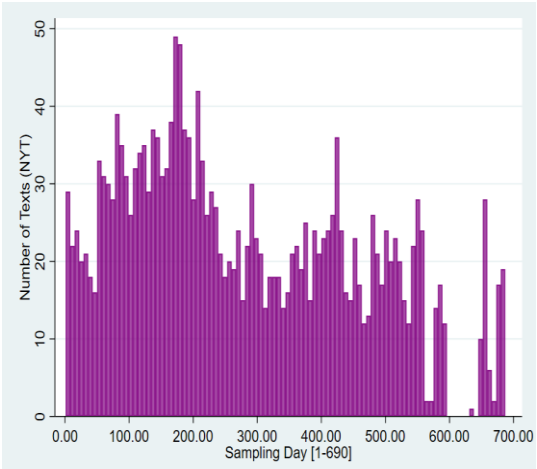


HFF (Fig 2.d)

NYT (Fig 2.e)



WSJ (Fig 2.f)


Number of Texts (NYT)
0
10
20
30
40
50
0.00
100.00
200.00
300.00
400.00
500.00
600.00
700.00
Sampling Day [1-690]

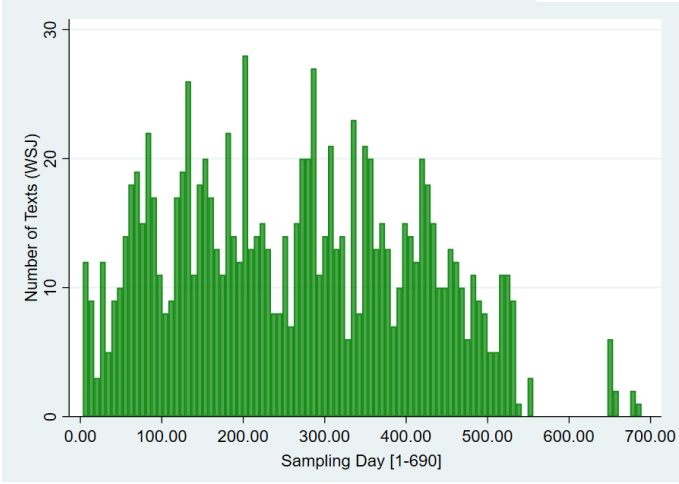

Number of Texts (WSJ)
0
10
20
30
0.00
100.00
200.00
300.00
400.00
500.00
600.00
700.00
Sampling Day [1-690]

Figure 2.5

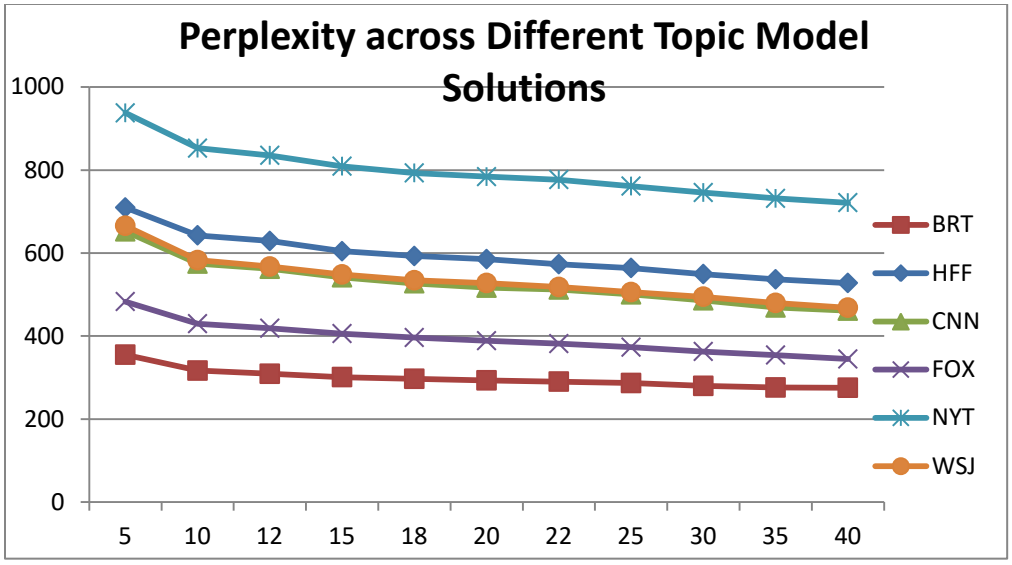


Table 2.5

Topics per Solution (*k*= X)	BRT	HFF	CNN	FOX	NYT	WSJ
5	355.1522	709.6023	652.1795	483.0734	937.5991	665.6802
10	316.7634	642.67	574.477	429.7465	852.5505	582.8637
12	309.0707	628.9872	562.0429	418.7579	835.3219	567.3743
15	301.0847	604.3198	541.4627	405.9206	809.1552	548.406
18	297.0068	592.7345	527.1288	396.4413	792.9953	534.357
20	293.2506	585.3043	516.5505	388.7022	783.9108	527.7954
22	290.2498	573.1492	512.0497	381.7155	776.9066	518.1151
25	286.7744	564.0442	500.3482	373.1242	761.246	505.8788
30	279.8833	549.3482	486.0236	362.8069	745.6888	494.7819
35	276.0691	536.5891	468.7608	354.3248	731.575	479.8463
40	275.4747	527.8531	461.1932	344.7237	721.4199	468.3982

Figures & Tables 3.a – 3.f: Topic Model Solutions, Terms & Prevalence

BREITBART: Topic Top 10 Terms (Fig 3.a)

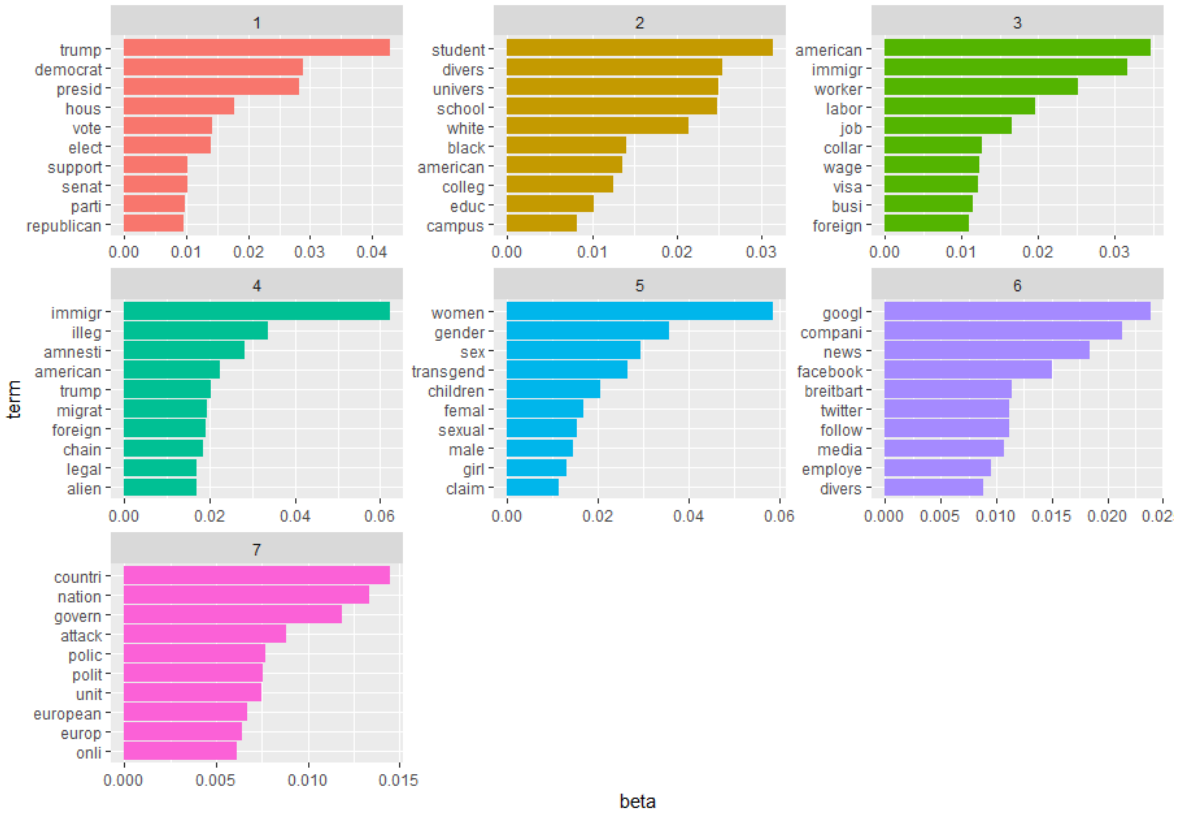


Table 3a: Breitbart Topic Prevalence *(Corpus Size--1443 Texts)*

Topic Number	Topic Name	Freq & Prop of Docs with Gamma > 0.7		Freq & Prop of Docs with Gamma > 0.3	
7	International: Europe	151	0.105	399	0.277
2	Colleges and Universities	137	0.095	340	0.204
6	Tech Industry	126	0.087	295	0.155
4	Immigration 1	102	0.071	199	0.138
1	Politics and Politicians	90	0.062	327	0.227
3	Immigration 2	73	0.051	136	0.094
5	Gender: Gender and Sexuality	22	0.015	107	0.074

CNN: Topic Top 10 Terms (Fig 3.b)

Table 3b: CNN Topic Prevalence *(Corpus Size--1661 Texts)*

Topic Number	Topic Name	Freq & Prop of Docs with Gamma > 0.7		Freq & Prop of Docs with Gamma > 0.3	
3	Traveling and Tourism	123	0.074	197	0.119
6	Popular Culture and Entertainment	95	0.057	315	0.190
9	Gender: Gender in the Workplace	89	0.054	258	0.155
4	Immigration	81	0.049	239	0.144
5	Business	66	0.040	261	0.157
1	Politics and Politicians 1	44	0.026	209	0.126
8	Cities and Communities	44	0.026	263	0.158
2	Racial Identity and Difference	29	0.017	162	0.098
7	Politics and Politicians 2	23	0.014	106	0.064

FOX: Topic Top 10 Terms (Fig 3.c)

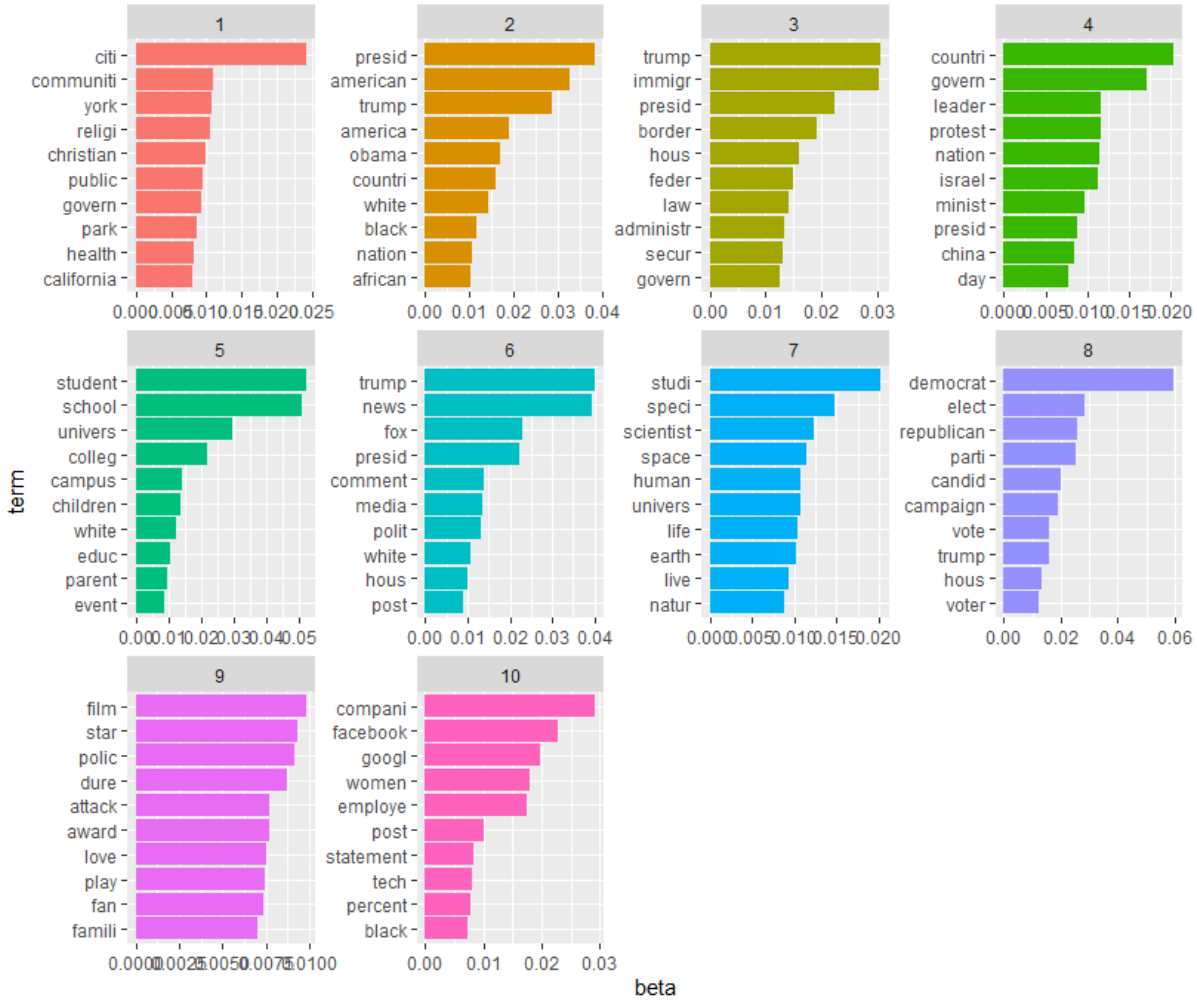


Table 3c: FOX Topic Prevalence *(Corpus Size--763 Texts)*

Topic Number	Topic Name	Freq & Prop of Docs with Gamma > 0.7		Freq & Prop of Docs with Gamma > 0.3	
7	STEM & Natural Science	57	0.075	74	0.097
9	Pop Culture and Entertainment	44	0.058	130	0.170
4	International: China and Israel	38	0.050	117	0.153
3	Immigration	30	0.039	81	0.106
10	The Tech Industry	27	0.035	120	0.157
5	Colleges and Universities	25	0.033	88	0.115
8	Politics and Politicians 3	23	0.030	89	0.117
2	Politics and Politicians 1	11	0.014	78	0.102
6	Politics and Politicians 2	9	0.012	110	0.144
1	Cities and Communities	8	0.010	76	0.100

HUFFINGTON POST: Topic Top 10 Terms (Fig 3.d)

Table 3d: Huffington Post Topic Prevalence *(Corpus Size--1433 Texts)*

Topic Number	Topic Name	Freq & Prop of Docs with Gamma > 0.7		Freq & Prop of Docs with Gamma > 0.3	
6	Politics and Politicians	55	0.038	181	0.126
9	Pop Culture and Entertainment	53	0.037	242	0.169
5	Relationships and Social Networks	41	0.029	303	0.211
8	Immigration	36	0.025	127	0.089
4	STEM and Public Health	33	0.023	157	0.11
2	Business	27	0.019	194	0.135
10	Colleges	16	0.011	86	0.06
1	Race Identity and Difference	8	0.006	160	0.112
3	Cities and Communities	8	0.006	122	0.085
7	Gender: Gender and Sexuality	4	0.003	175	0.122

NEW YORK TIMES: Topic Top 10 Terms (Fig 3.e)

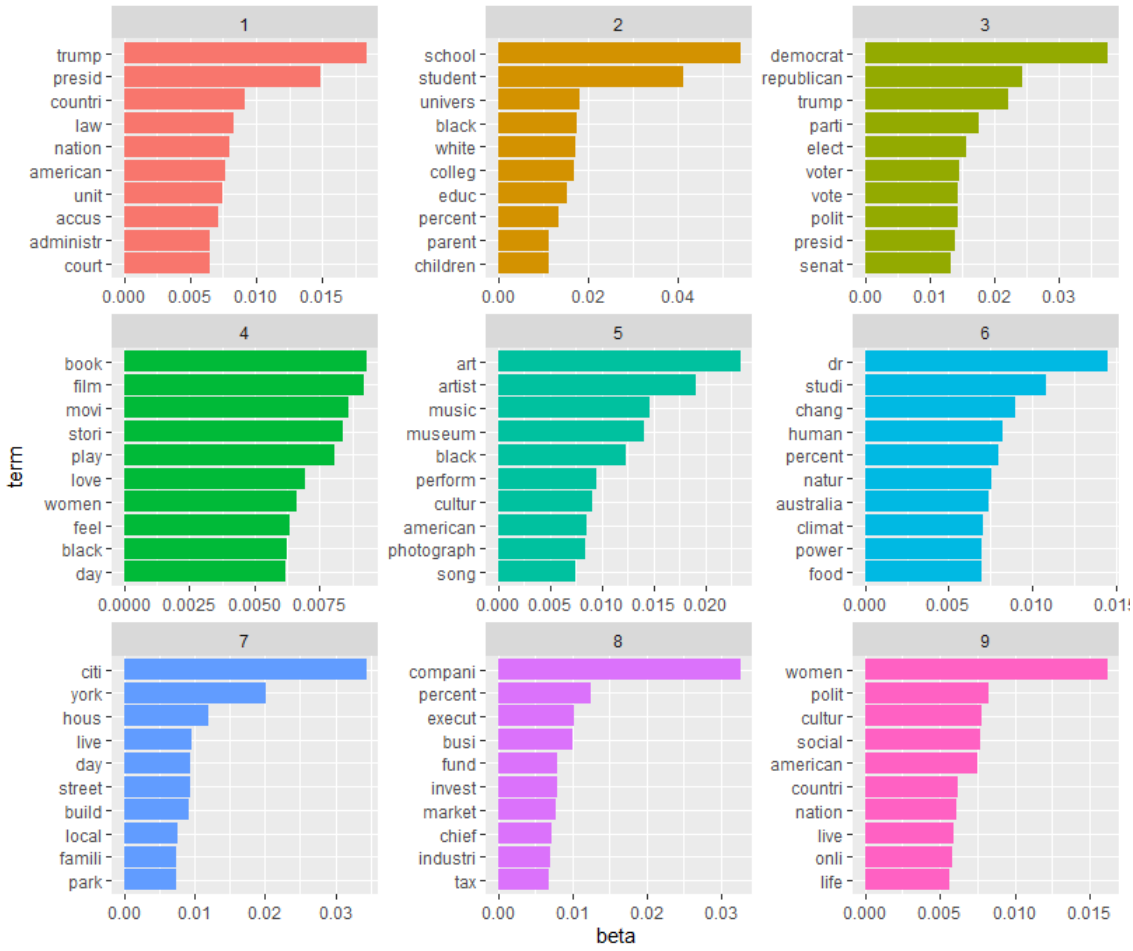


Table 3e: New York Times Topic Prevalence *(Corpus Size--2131 Texts)*

Topic Number	Topic Name	Freq & Prop of Docs with Gamma > 0.7		Freq & Prop of Docs with Gamma > 0.3	
3	Politics and Politicians	109	0.051	296	0.139
4	Pop Culture and Entertainment	107	0.050	454	0.213
8	Business	76	0.036	303	0.142
6	STEM and Natural Science	65	0.031	159	0.075
2	Colleges	53	0.025	166	0.078
7	Communities and Cities	43	0.020	241	0.113
5	Fine Arts, Culture, and Entertainment	42	0.020	223	0.105
9	Gender and Society	38	0.018	349	0.164
1	Immigration & Politics	34	0.016	402	0.189

WALL STREET JOURNAL: Topic Top 10 Terms (Fig 3.f)

Table 3f: Wall Street Journal Topic Prevalence *(Corpus Size--1043 Texts)*

Topic Number	Topic Name	Freq & Prop of Docs with Gamma > 0.7		Freq & Prop of Docs with Gamma > 0.3	
4	Colleges and Universities	90	0.086	231	0.221
8	Business 1	78	0.075	208	0.199
7	Business 2	60	0.058	165	0.158
5	Gender: Gender in the Workplace	56	0.054	154	0.149
3	Immigration	49	0.047	94	0.09
6	Politics and Politicians	38	0.036	107	0.103
2	Politics and Politicians	28	0.027	192	0.184
1	Cities and Communities	22	0.021	120	0.115

Table 4: Comparing Topic Model Solutions

Consistent Topics	BRT	CNN	FOX	HFF	NYT	WSJ
Politics and Politicians	X	X	X	X	X	X
Colleges and Universities	X		X	X	X	X
Immigration	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cities and Communities		X	X	X	X	X
Business		X		X	X	X
Popular Culture and Entertainment		X	X	X	X	
Mixed Topics						
Gender						
Gender and Sexuality	X			X		
Gender in the Workplace		X				X
Gender in Society					X	
International						
Europe	X					
Israel and China			X			
STEM						
STEM and Natural Science			X		X	
STEM and Public Health				X		
Tech Industry	X		X			
Racial Identity and Difference		X		X		
Unique Topics						
Traveling and Tourism		X				
Fine Arts and Culture					X	
Relationships and Social Networks				X		

Figure 4.a: Rearticulation Sub-Samples versus Total Sample over Time (Day Index)

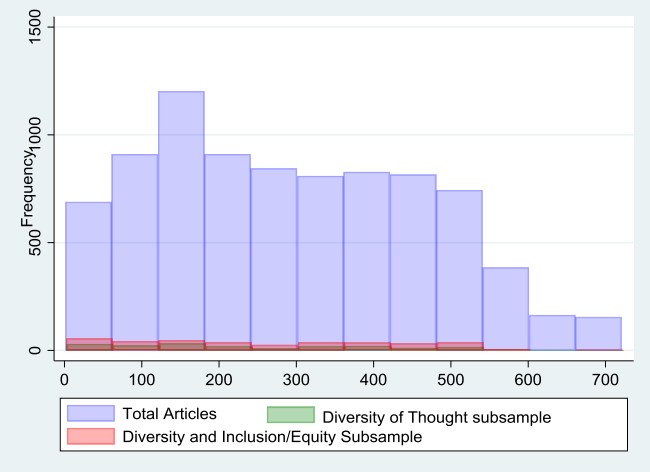


Figure 4.b:"Diversity of Thought" Subsample over Time (Day Index)

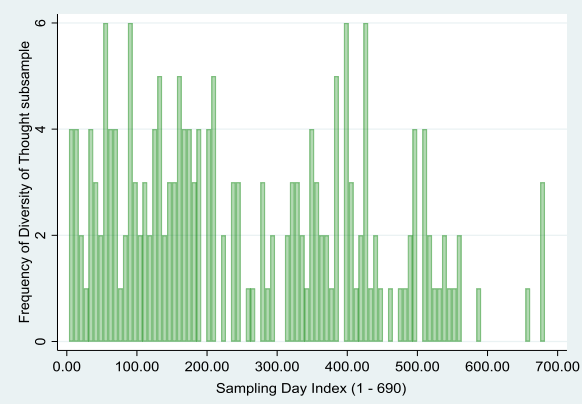


Figure 4.c:"Diversity and Equity/Inclusion" Subsample over Time (Day Index)

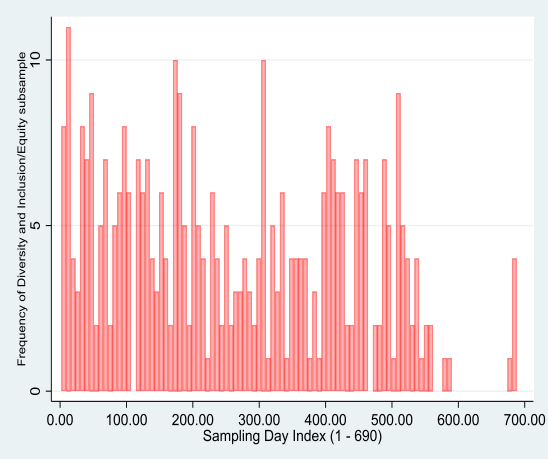


Table 4a : ”Diversity of Thought” Subsample Search Strings

Search Strings, Rearticulation SubSamples		
***Diversity of Thought/Viewpoint Subsample* (193 texts total)**		***Diversity of Equity/Inclusion Subsample* (372 texts total)**
diversity of thought*		diversity and equity
thought diversity		diversity and equality
diversity of belief*		equity and diversity
diversity of opinion*		equality and diversity
opinion diversity		diversity and inclusion
diversity of viewpoint*		inclusion and diversity
viewpoint diversity		diversity and access
diversity of ideology		access and diversity
ideological diversity		
diversity of ideologies		
diversity of ideas		
idea* diversity		
diversity of perspective*		

Table 4.b---Rearticulation Sub-Samples, Descriptive Stats

Diversity of Thought/Viewpoint [193 Texts]	BRT	CNN	FOX	HFF	NYT	WSJ
Number of Items	81	9	22	21	34	26
Unique Words	845	1577	1033	1326	2197	1333
Text Average Length (Words)	217.691	500.8889	300.7727	915.3636	551.2941	337.2308
Text St Dev (Words)	132.615	250.8244	231.3925	2130.416	497.1994	142.0021
Min # of Words	37	261	48	99	219	104
Max # of Words	687	949	1219	10069	2723	706
Diversity and Equity/ Inclusion [372 texts]	BRT	CNN	FOX	HFF	NYT	WSJ
Number of Items	49	26	33	155	64	45
Unique Words	676	1108	1006	1262	1473	1152
Text Average Length (Words)	126.306	277.077	172.182	314.529	395.25	316.622
Text St Dev (Words)	50.658	144.78	84.574	299.34	227.197	169.184
Min # of Words	39	100	46	75	84	101

Table 4.c: Top Words by Corpus--*Diversity of Thought/Viewpoint*

BRT	Instances	***CNN***	*Instances*	***FOX***	*Instances*
googl	434	player	40	trump	108
compani	223	peopl	39	news	80
facebook	189	conserv	34	polit	78
news	185	trump	31	presid	71
polit	169	countri	29	facebook	45
conserv	162	time	28	conserv	44
employe	161	chang	28	time	43
trump	144	tech	28	democrat	43
speech	138	presid	27	media	42
report	127	polit	27	peopl	41
HFF	Instances	***NYT***	*Instances*	***WSJ***	*Instances*
peopl	179	trump	175	polit	104
time	101	peopl	169	nation	76
becaus	89	time	144	conserv	67
women	82	presid	133	compani	67
atlant	72	heritag	123	media	61
actual	67	school	103	time	58
question	65	polit	99	peopl	56
person	60	conserv	98	station	55
realli	59	colleg	95	trump	49
veri	56	student	94	view	46
black	54	compani	83	rule	44

Table 4.d: Top Words by Corpus--*Diversity of Inclusion/Equity*

BRT	Instances	CNN	Instances	FOX	Instances
student	103	compani	79	peopl	51
univers	94	women	76	trump	50
school	69	trump	75	colleg	47
report	66	peopl	75	report	47
white	52	white	68	student	44
american	49	presid	63	day	40
peopl	44	black	55	news	36
campus	42	player	54	american	35
presid	42	inclus	53	compani	35
HFF	Instances	NYT	Instances	WSJ	Instances
peopl	737	compani	271	compani	230
women	647	women	248	women	186
time	392	peopl	227	school	145
black	319	time	194	peopl	134
white	277	percent	158	manag	120
student	266	black	150	employe	106
told	266	execut	137	time	101
becaus	260	school	136	team	96
compani	249	employe	131	execut	92
american	239	includ	123	accord	80

Table 5.a: Qualitatively-Identified Topics-- *Diversity of Thought/Viewpoint*

Diversity of Thought/Viewpoint: Themes, Topics and News Stories		
Rank (Prominence)	*Name & General Subject*	Description / Notes
1	Tech Industry & Social Media	Several stories related to Google, particularly James Damore, a Google employee who penned the infamous biological-sexism memo about the lack of gender diversity (after being fired from Google, he went on to sue the company and is now a right-wing champion for diversity-of-thought arguments that defend racial hierarchy and patriarchy). Several stories about Alex Jones and other far-Right pundits being banned from Twitter and other social media platforms. Then, when right-wing figures were given a new platform on SiriusXM radio, public protest and backlash was Several stories about Peter Thiel, a conservative Silicon Valley tycoon who became another right-wing champion for his comments and drama about the lack of politcal diversity (essentially, a lack of conservatives) among tech industry employees.
2	Colleges and Universities	Several stories regarding college campuses, faculty, and guest speakers. In BRT particularly, the social actors quoted in the articles are often saying something glib about "diversity of thought" lacking in a college campus; many such BRT articles have a highly normative tone and reflect general conservatism's anti-intellectualism and anti-Academy narrative.
3	Popular Culture & Entertainment	Several articles discussed prominent media figures in movies, sports, music, etc. In many of the articles within this super-category, a quote from one of these individuals uses a phrase relevant to the sub-sample. A majority of these texts don't have much normative or substantive importance.
4	Miscellaneous	This final category represents a catch-all for other articles within the sub-sample. Some topics discussed include AT&T and Time Warner's business merger, Several texts covering a series of conversations from prominent international figures such as the UN General and the Pope criticizing the death penalty. Most of these texts were not particularly informative.

Table 5.b: Qualitatively-Identified Topics-- *Diversity of Inclusion/Equity*

Diversity of Thought/Viewpoint: Themes, Topics and News Stories		
Rank (Prominence)	*Name & General Subject*	Description / Notes
1	Popular Culture & Entertainment	Many articles, particularly from HFF, involved Hollywood and the Oscars, sports leagues, ESPN, popular musicians, fashion icons, and other such figures. In a large number of these articles, such social actors mention the importance of diversity and inclusion in a general normative sense that is attentive to racial and gender inequalities, although I caution against interpreting such comments a strong evidence of truly critical and equity-oriented processes in Hollywood or sports; it's just talk, ultimately.
2	Colleges and Universities	Several of the articles discuss colleges and universities, particularly those with an office titled similarly to UMN's own "Diversity and Equity" office. Most of the articles just quoted a person whose job title used a relevant phrase. But, there is a substantial cluster of articles in BRT which scrutinizes the salary and qualifications of faculty who work for a Diversity and Equity office, strongly implying and outright stating that such professional employments shouldn't exist; I highlight this trend in the texts as it is a concerning reminder of the forces we're up against.
3	Businesses	Similar to above, a large number of articles have to do with quoting an individual whose business title or office position involves a phrase such as "Diversity and Inclusion" or "Diversity and Equity." There is an interesting cluster of Op-Eds in WSJ and in HFF which make a business case for increasing diversity and highlight empirical research which illustrates the continued lack of diversity in corporate boardrooms. Within this cluster, a large number of texts quote a diversity-management professional who is doing damage control and public-relations-work to improve a company's image, particularly when a company is in hot water over sexual harassment or racial discrimination allegations
4	Miscellaneous	Several articles that don't fall into the above described themes. Some clusters in here include (a) several texts describing leaked emails that revealed that John Ullyot, a top-level Dept. of Veterans Affairs official instated by Trump, had barred his subordinates from releasing pro-diversity statements and condemning the 2017 white supremacist tikki-torch rally in Charlottesville, (b) some statements by the British military about increasing diversity in their ranks, and (c) sexual harassment allegations about Ross Livenhson, ex-CEO of the LA Times, and (d) PayPal barring white supremacist groups from using the platform for financial transactions , which was greatly contested and criticized by the texts from BRT

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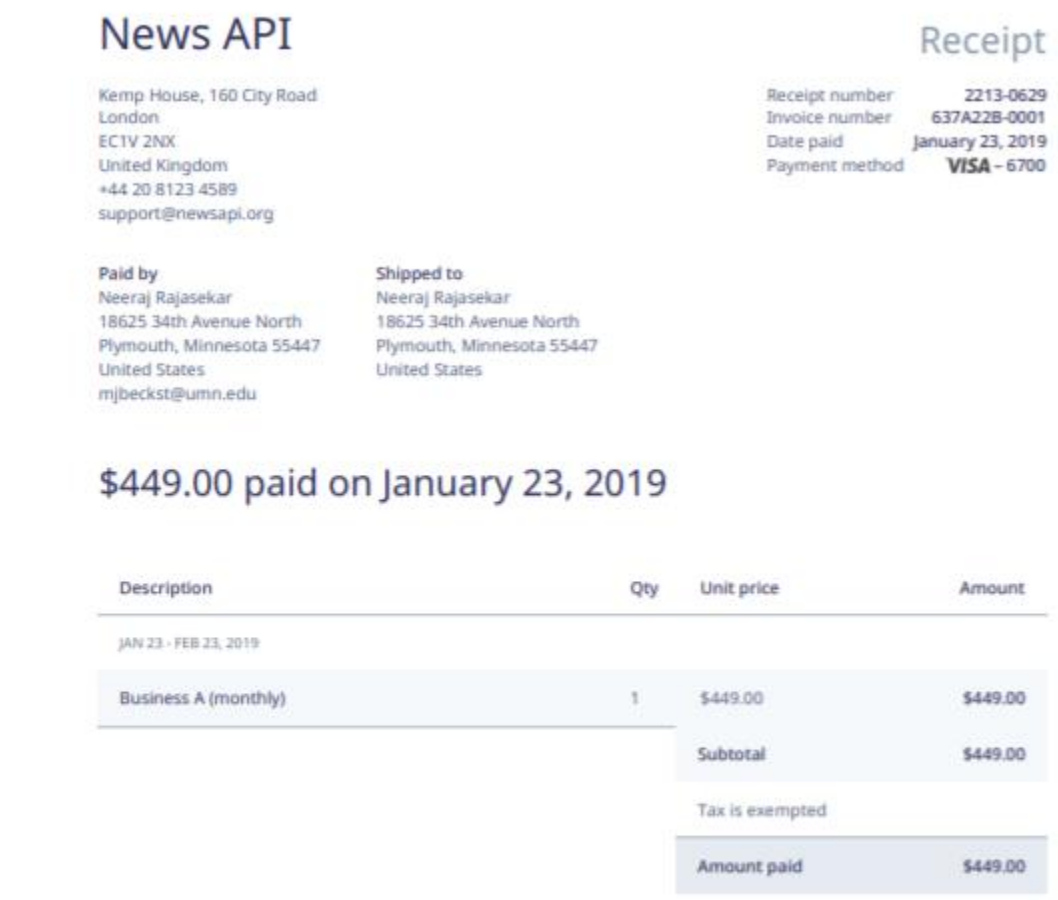
Methods Appendix

Diversity Discourse in News Media

NewsAPI Proof of Purchase



News API

Receipt

Kemp House, 160 City Road
London
EC1V 2NX
United Kingdom
+44 20 8123 4589
support@newsapi.org

Receipt number	2213-0629
Invoice number	637A22B-0001
Date paid	January 23, 2019
Payment method	VISA – 6700

Paid by
Neeraj Rajasekar
18625 34th Avenue North
Plymouth, Minnesota 55447
United States
mjbeckst@umn.edu

Shipped to
Neeraj Rajasekar
18625 34th Avenue North
Plymouth, Minnesota 55447
United States

$449.00 paid on January 23, 2019

Description	Qty	Unit price	Amount
JAN 23 - FEB 23, 2019			
Business A (monthly)	1	$449.00	$449.00
		Subtotal	$449.00
		Tax is exempted	
		Amount paid	$449.00